

1527/
A
VINDICATION
OF
The Rights
OF
Ecclesiastical Authority :
BEING AN
ANSWER
To the First Part
OF THE
Protestant Reconciler.

By WILL. SHERLOCK, D. D.
Master of the TEMPLE.

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THE RIGHTS

OF THE

PEOPLE

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

AND

THE

RIGHTS

OF THE

PEOPLE

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA



TO

The most Reverend Father in God

WILLIAM,

By Divine Providence,

L^d Archb. of *Canterbury*,

HIS GRACE

Primate of all *England* & Metropolitan;

AND

One of his Majesties most Honourable
Privy-Council.

May it please your Grace,

THE Cause of the Church
of *England* has been so
learnedly and judiciously defen-
ded against her Dissenting Ad-
versaries, that many of the Dis-
senters themselves, who have any
measure of Wit or Modesty, if

A 2

they

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they are not ashamed of their Good Old Cause, yet are ashamed of many good old Arguments for their Nonconformity; and now since they cannot dispute down the Church of *England*, they try another way, *viz.* to perswade the Governours of the Church to part with the Church of *England* themselves, and to sacrifice her Constitutions, and the Order and Decency of publick Worship, to the dearer interests of Peace and Charity; which would be a notable Stratagem, could it take effect. For next to the blessed Reformation by Popular Tumults & a Civil War, there is not a more effectual way to destroy the Church of *England*, than by the Reconciling Designe, which will be as certain, though it may
be

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be a more lingring death than the other.

I am so thoroughly convinced of this, that I thought I could not do better service than by examining the Pretences of our Conforming or Nonconforming Reconcilers, which our *Protestant Reconciler* complains was never yet done ; by which if he means that there never was an entire Discourse written upon this Argument, I believe he is in the right, though there has been enough occasionally said to answer such Pretences, and there never was occasion before this to write a whole Book about it.

But our *Protestant Reconciler* having collected all those Arguments together which have ever been used in this Cause, and made a great Book of them, it seemed

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more necessary now, that these Reconciling Principles should be particularly examined. I must confess this Author is a very good Collector, and has said as much as has been said before, and no more; onely he has managed the Cause to as much advantage as a popular and insinuating Rhetorick can give it. His Book is little else than Declamation and Harangue, which he knew was very apt to move and affect the People, and to raise a great Cry against the uncharitable Church of *England*; and this was the onely difficulty in answering it: He has the Passionate side of the Question, and it is very hard to answer a Passion by plain Reason; which forced me sometimes to give some more spirit and quickness to the Answer, than

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than might be thought necessary
or expedient by men of a cool
and sedate Reason.

Whether I have given a satisfactory Answer to the *Reconciler*, I humbly submit to your Grace's Judgement, and beg your pardon for the too long delays of it, occasioned by frequent and necessary Avocations, a crazy Body which cannot well bear hard study, and a sharp fit of Sickness, since I first undertook it ; but if the *Reconciler* be answered, it is not too late : for though he has recanted his Book, a Recantation is no Answer ; and if we may believe other Accounts, he has dealt as sincerely with his Governours in recanting his Book, as he did in writing it.

That God of his infinite mercy would restore Peace and U-

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nity, without destroying the best constituted, and the most Primitive and Apostolical Church in the World, and bless and preserve your Grace for the defence and good government of his Church, is the hearty Prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Grace's

most dutiful Servant,

Will. Sherlock.

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**A
VINDICATION
OF
The Rights
OF
Ecclesiastical Authority :
BEING
An ANSWER
TO THE
Protestant Reconciler.**

The INTRODUCTION.

TH E name of a Reconciler, especially of a *Protestant Reconciler*, is very popular at such a time as this; and it is a very invidious thing for any man to own himself an Enemy to so Christian a Design; and therefore I do not pretend to answer the
B Title,

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Title, which is a very good one, but to examine how well the Book agrees with the Title, and whether our Author has chosen the proper method for such a Reconciliation. For this Reconciliation will prove very chargeable to the Church, if she must renounce her own Authority to reconcile Dissenters.

The usual methods taken by Reconcilers, have been either to convince men, that they do not differ so much as they think they do, but that the Controversie is only about the manner of expressing the same thing; or that they are both gone too far into opposite Extremes, and have left Truth and Peace in the middle; or that the matter in dispute is not of such moment, as to contend about it; or that the truth of either side of the Question is not certain; or that one of the contending Parties is in the wrong, and therefore ought to yield to him who is in the right.

But our Reconciler has taken a new way by himself, to prove that both the contending Parties are in the wrong, and that both of them are in the right; for thus he adjusts the Controversie: *He who saith, that it is sinful and mischievous to impose those unnecessary Ceremonies, and to retain those disputable expressions of our Liturgie, which may be altered and removed without transgressing of the Law of God, saith true.* (And thus the present Constitution of the Church of England, in these present circumstances, is with great modesty and submission, without any dispute, pronounced sinful, by a professed Member, and as we may sup-

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suppose from his own Character of himself, by a dignified Clergy-man of our Church). And that he also who pleads for separation from Communion with us, on account of those few scrupled Ceremonies, and disputable Expressions of our Liturgie, is sinful and unreasonable, as well as mischievous, doth also speak the words of truth and soberness; or that one should not impose these things as the conditions of Communion, and the other should not, when they are once imposed, refuse Communion upon that account: i. e. the Church sins in imposing, and the Dissenter sins in disobeying such Impositions. The Church is in the right, as to the lawfulness of what she imposes, but sins in the exercise of her Authority in commanding lawful things. The Dissenter is in the right, in affirming these Impositions to be the sin of the Imposers, and yet sins in not obeying them; that is, the Dissenter judges aright of the duty of his Superiours, but is mistaken in his own. And if he can reconcile these things, it will be one good step towards a Reconciliation.

Governours indeed may be over-rigorous and severe in the exercise of a just Authority; but I dare not say that they always sin when they are so, but that they do not act so wisely or so charitably as they might do. For the Wisdom and Charity of Government is so nice a thing, and subject to so many difficulties, that the case of Governours would be very hard, should every mistake in such matters be a sin; and Government it self must necessarily lose its Sacredness and Authority,

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if every Subject may censure the Wisdom and Charity of lawful Commands and Impositions, and vote them to be *mischievous* and *sinful*, if they do not agree with his Notions of Prudence and Charity.

All that Subjects are concerned to enquire about the Commands of their Superiours, is concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of them; if they go any farther, they make themselves Governours, not Subjects: and therefore it is not very modest to condemn the Commands (otherwise civilly called *Impositions*) of Superiours, as *sinful* and *mischievous*, when it is lawful to obey them. And he who thinks Dissenters do ill in refusing Obedience, does not well himself in charging the Church with doing what is *sinful* and *mischievous* in imposing.

But then on the other hand, if the Church do sin in imposing, she either exceeds her Authority and Commission, and so imposes without Authority, or else she imposes something unlawful; and in either of these cases no man can blame Dissenters for refusing Communion with the Church in such matters. For no man is bound to communicate in unlawful things, nor to obey where there is no Authority to command. And therefore our Reconciler can never reconcile these two Propositions, That the Church sins in imposing, the Dissenter sins in rejecting such Impositions, and in refusing Communion, where it cannot be had without submitting to them. For though we are bound to submit to the Supreme

preme Powers, when they act illegally, because we are bound never to resist: yet we are not bound to yield an Active Obedience to any illegal Commands: but the Church, considered as a Church, or Ecclesiastical Body, having no external and compulsory Authority, if she commands what she has no Authority to command, no man is bound to obey her; and if this occasion a Schism, she herself is the Schismatick.

But to shew how ominously our Reconciler stumbles at the threshold, let us state the case a little otherwise. The great reason he assigns throughout his Book to prove that the Church sins in these Impositions is, that there is a great number of men among us, who either scruple the lawfulness, or positively assert the unlawfulness of them; and this occasions a Schism in the Church. To prevent which, the Church is bound in charity to the Souls of men, not to command such scrupled and unnecessary Ceremonies, and sins if she does. Now in this case also, the sin and guilt can lie but on one side. For if the Dissenters, notwithstanding this, may and ought to conform to such Impositions, then there is no necessity, upon that account, for the Church to alter her Constitutions, nor does she sin in imposing; if they may not, then the Dissenters do not sin in rejecting such Impositions. If some particular Governors are affected by ill principles, this contracts a personal guilt on themselves; but it neither excuses Dissenters, nor affects the Government; while

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they command nothing but what the Church has Authority to command, and what may be lawfully obeyed: but if the meer scruples of Dissenters will make the Commands of the Church sinful, when there is no other fault to be found in her Constitutions, but that Dissenters will not obey them, this overthrows all government in the Church. So that our Reconciler, who is resolved to prove both these Propositions, that the Church sins in imposing, and the Dissenter in breaking Communion for such Impositions, will have much ado to reconcile his two Books together. One part of his Task is certainly needless; for if he can but convince the World of the truth of either part, he effectually does the business. If he can convince the Dissenter that he ought to conform to these Impositions, the Church may impose without sin; or if he can persuade our Governours that it is sinful to impose, there is no need to deal with Dissenters: and therefore methinks it had favoured of more modesty, and greater deference to Authority, to have tried his skill upon Dissenters first. But our Author, by over-doing, is like to spoil all. For it is very probable he will convince Dissenters of what they believed before, that the Church cannot impose such things: from whence, in spite of all his Logick, they will conclude that they are not bound to obey; and he will convince the Government, that the Dissenter ought to conform, and sins in not doing it, which justifies their Impositions. And thus he ends just where he began.

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Nay, could he convince the Church that she ought not to impose upon Dissenters while their scruples last, and the Dissenters that they ought not to scruple these things, nor disobey them, when they are commanded; we may expect it will take up some time to adjust the dispute, after all this, between the Church and the Dissenters, which of them shall yield: for both sides cannot yield, unless we will say that the Church must leave off imposing, and then the Dissenters must begin to obey; that the Church must no longer command, and then the Dissenter is bound to obey, when no body commands.

So that could he effectually prove that the Church and the Dissenter are both guilty of sin, the one in imposing, the other in refusing Obedience; yet I do not see what Reconciliation this is like to make. For it is not enough to reconcile two contending Parties, to prove that they are both in the fault, unless you can propose some middle terms of accommodation, or prove that though they are both equally in the right, and equally in the wrong, yet one of them is bound to yield.

Our Reconciler has not attempted any such thing as this; nor indeed can he: for there is no medium between the Authority of commanding, and the duty and necessity of Obedience, wherein Governours and Subjects may unite without either commanding or obeying; which destroys the very Relation between Governours and Subjects. Nor has he told us which of them must give way first, unless

we may conclude this from the order of publishing his Books, that the Church ought to give place to the Dissenters; and then his second Book is useless, for there will be no need for Dissenters to obey the Church. But our admirable Reconciler has first pelted the Church with the Dissenters Arguments, and now serves the Dissenters in the same nature; which is an excellent way to revive a Quarrel, if it had been ended: but bare disputing on both sides, was never thought a likely way to reconcile a Quarrel.

I have premised this, to take off the odium of answering the *Protestant Reconciler*; which a man may very honestly do, and yet be a great and passionate Friend to the Reconciliation of Protestants: for there is not the least offer made towards a Reconciliation in all this Book. He onely teaches the Dissenters to cast the sin and mischief of all our Divisions upon the Church, and the Church to cast it back upon the Dissenters, and so leaves them just at the same distance that he found them; unless possibly he have added to the confidence and obstinacy of Dissenters, by joyning with them in their lewd and unreasonable Clamours against the Church.

But let us consider what betrayed him into this mistake; which he very honestly and plainly tells us, in these words: *That which chiefly did confirm me in this apprehension, was this observation, That I found each of the Parties strong and copious upon these two points, but elsewhere silent. The Pleaders for Conformity still pressing*

Reconcil. p. 3.

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pressing the necessity that men should yield obedience to the things commanded, but seldom saying any thing to justify the exercise of that Authority which laid upon the Subject the burthen of obedience to things unnecessary: and whosoever shall peruse the Writings of the learned Dr. St. and his Defenders, will find that they have been very silent upon this head, and have upon the matter left our Rulers in the lurch. And on the other hand, I find that our Dissenters are very prone on all occasions to cry out against imposing these things as the conditions of Communion; and the excluding all that are not able to submit unto them from the privilege of Church-Communion; but they say little of any weight and moment, to shew it is utterly unlawful, under the present circumstances, to yield submission and obedience to the things imposed.

Now as for matter of fact, this is utterly false. For the Dissenters themselves (to give every one their due) have used great variety of Arguments, not onely to prove the unlawfulness of imposing these things, but the unlawfulness of the things themselves; otherwise what is it that the great Champions of the Church of England, ever since the first rise of this Controverſie, and the Dean and his Defenders of late, have answered? Did they make Objections for the Dissenters, and then answer them; or did they answer such Objections as they found made to their hands? Whether what they object have any weight or moment, is another Question: but it seems very unreasonable to charge men with saying nothing,

nothing, because they say nothing to the purpose, when they say as much as they can, and as much as the cause will bear; by the same Figure we may assert, that the *Protestant Reconciler* has said nothing. But yet if no Answer had been returned to prove that all he has said is nothing, I strongly fancy that he and several others of his Size, would have thought that he had said something; and so would the Dissenters too, had not their something been so often proved to be nothing.

And he has treated the Advocates of the Church, and the Dean and his Defenders, with the same civility and honesty. For have they indeed said nothing for the lawfulness of imposing these things? and is not that a sufficient justification of the Authority which imposes? Did he never read any thing in vindication of Ecclesiastical Authority, in commanding indifferent things? Could he find nothing in the Dean and his Defenders tending this way? I assure him I have found a great deal, which he may hear of in a convenient place, which may teach him to make more careful observations for the future.

But if this had been so, methinks it had more become a Minister and Son of the Church of England to have tried his skill to have supplied these defects of his Brethren, than to have exposed the nakedness of his Mother, by tearing off her Vail with his own hands.

Every honest and prudent man thinks himself bound to obey and to justify the Rules and Usages of the Church, as far as they are law-
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ful and innocent, and to persuade others to do so; and though he should observe some things which in his private opinion he judges might be altered for the better, yet he does not think it his duty to raise a great Noise and Outcry about this, and to call furiously for a Change and Reformation, to set the people into a ferment, and to alarm the Government with new Models and Platforms of Discipline and Worship. A wise man considers what different apprehensions men have of expediency, fitness, and decency of things, and that it properly belongs to Governours to determine these matters; but it does not become private Christians, when Authority does not ask their opinions and advice, to sit in judgment upon the Wisdom of Government: for there would be no end of this in such matters, wherein mens minds differ as much as their faces do.

Had our Reconciler been a Member of the Convocation when such matters had been under debate, it had become him to have declared his mind freely, where his Arguments might either have obtained such a Reformation as he desired, or have received a fair Answer, without appearing abroad to disturb weak and unstable minds, or to confirm and harden men who are already engaged in an actual Schism: at least, if he be so thoroughly convinced of the truth of what he says, if he be (as he says) so sensible of his own weakness and proneness to mistake in judging, and most unwilling to do the least difference to the Church---

Preface, p. 2, 3.

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Church—or to those Reverend Superiours whom from his heart he honours; what necessity was he under of publishing such a Discourse as this? Why did he not first ask the opinion of his Brethren and Superiours about it? What service did he expect to do to the Church, by appealing to the People (who certainly are not the best Judges in such matters, and have no power to reform but by Mutinies and Seditions) against her uncharitable Impositions? And when he has published a Book against the Constitutions of our Church, agreed on by the wisdom of the Convocation, and established by Act of Parliament, when he has already the most mature and deliberate judgment of Church and State, it looks like a very hypocritical piece of modesty, a downright Challenge to the whole Clergy to cry out, as he does, *Teach me, my Reverend Brethren, and I will hold my peace; cause me to understand wherein I have erred, and I will thankfully, yea I will publicly retract it.* Any body, I think, but a Protestant Reconciler, would call this libelling the Church, and hectoring and out-braving all his Mothers Children.

How the rest of my Brethren will digest this outrageous Contempt of Church-Authority, I cannot tell: for my part, I cannot bear it, but am resolved to do my weak endeavours to vindicate my dear Mother from the rudeness and insolence of her undutiful Son. And in order to this, I shall consider what it is he contends for, wherein we agree, and where we part, and fairly debate on which side the truth lies.

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The Proposition which he undertakes to prove, is contained in these words: *That things indifferent, which may be changed and altered without sin or violation of Gods Laws, ought not, especially under our present circumstances, to be imposed by Superiours as the Conditions of Communion, or as Conditions without which none shall minister in sacred things, though called to that work, and none shall be partakers of the publick Ordinances which Christ hath left to be the ordinary means of Grace and of Salvation to mankind, but shall upon refusal to submit unto them, for ever be excluded from the Church, and from the Priviledges belonging to the Members of it.* Reconcil. p. 4.

Where, by *indifferent things*, which may be changed and altered without sin or violation of Gods Laws, it is plain he means, whatever is not expressly commanded by God; and so must include all the Externals of Worship, Government, and Discipline, which are not enjoined by a divine Law. That these *ought not to be imposed*, signifies that it is *sinful and mischievous* to impose them, as he expressly asserted before, and which all his Arguments are P. 2. designed to prove; viz. that Governours sin in it. To *impose*, signifies onely to command; and to impose as *Conditions of Communion*, signifies no more than to *impose*, though it sounds bigger. For the Church makes such indifferent things the Conditions of Communion in no other sence than as she commands those of her Communion to worship God in such a manner; and rejects those which will not:

not: which is nothing more than to command, as to command is opposed to leaving every one at liberty to worship God as he pleases. So that if the Church have not Authority to make these indifferent things the terms of Communion in this sense, so as to reject those who will not worship God according to such Prescriptions, *i. e.* who will not obey the Governours of the Church wherein they live; then she has no power at all to command. And when he adds, *especially in our present circumstances*, he refers to those Divisions and Schisms which he says are occasioned by such Impositions. Whenever such Ceremonies are doubted and scrupled, and made an occasion of Schism, then especially it is a sin to impose them; but when he says *especially*, he plainly insinuates, that it is at all times sinful and unlawful to impose such uncommanded Rites and Modes of Worship, though it is a greater sin to do it, when there are any who scruple the lawfulness of such Impositions.

This is the Doctrine of our *Protestant Reconciler*, which I should rather have expected from a profess'd Enemy, than from a pretended Advocate of the Church of England. He has at once very modestly rejected all Ecclesiastical Authority in indifferent things. He has condemned all the Canons and Constitutions of the Church for the orderly performance of Religious Worship, from the Apostolic days until this time, which concern the external Circumstances and Ceremonies of
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Worship. He has plainly renounced one of those Articles of Religion, to which he has subscribed and declared his Assent, if he be a Member of our Church. For *Art. 20.* asserts, *That the Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies*: And if the Church has power to do this, I suppose she may do it without sin, and without asking leave of her Inferiours.

But though our Reconciler has stated this matter so generally, as to condemn all Ecclesiastical Authority in indifferent things, and has said many things which look that way in several parts of his Book; yet his open and avowed designe is onely to prove the sinfulness of such Impositions, when they are scrupled, and made the occasion of Schisms and Divisions in the Church, as he says it is at this day among us. And here I shall joyn issue with him, and give a particular Answer to every thing which has the least appearance of an Argument; which though it will make this Answer larger than I could wish, yet is necessary to stop the mouths of such pragmatistical Reconcilers, who are as troublesome and dangerous to the Government as Dissenters themselves.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the external Order and Decency of Worship, and the Authority of the Church in such matters.

THAT I may give a fair Answer to our *Protestant Reconciler*, I shall first examine some of his Mistakes, which run through his whole Book, and whereon the whole Argument of his Book is founded; the removing of which, to men of any competent understanding, would supersede the necessity of any farther Answer. And they either concern, 1. The usefulness of some Rites and Ceremonies of Religious Worship, and the Authority of the Church in such matters: Or, 2. The obligations of charity to the Souls of men, with the due measures and extent of it: Or, 3. That regard which ought to be had to an erroneous or scrupulous Conscience. From these Topics he all-along argues to prove that Church-Governours ought to alter the external Ceremonies of Worship, because they are of no value in themselves; and therefore charity to the Souls of men requires them in such things to condescend to the errors, or scruples, or weakness of their Brethren.

I shall begin with the first, which is the fundamental Mistake on which all the rest depend, and therefore must stand or fall with it; and

and that concerns the external Order and Decency of Worship, or the Authority of the Church, in prescribing Rites and Ceremonies for the more decent and orderly performance of Religious Worship.

Now concerning this matter, our Reconciler thinks that the external Ceremonies of Religion are of no account at all; for publick Worship may be performed as decently and reverently without the use of those Ceremonies which are in dispute, as with them. For thus he expressly and dogmatically asserts, *That the Ceremonies which are imposed by our Church, as they have nothing sinful in their nature for which Inferiours should refuse submission to them, so have they nothing of real goodness, nothing of positive Order, Decency, or Reverence, for which they ought to be commanded.* Now if he can make this good, I am resolved to meddle no farther in this Controversie, for it is not worth the while to spend Ink and Paper in defence of such Ceremonies as have no positive Order, Decency, or Reverence, for which they ought to be commanded. For I am sure no Ceremonies in Religion, which do not serve the ends of Order, Decency, and Reverence, ought to be commanded: for that is to trifle in sacred things.

But let us hear how he explains himself; for this is a Proposition which seems to need some explication. I call (says he) *that positive Order, Decency, or Reverence, which being done, renders the Service more decent, reverent, and orderly; and being undone, the Service be-*

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comes irreverent, indecent, and disorderly performed. So that my meaning is, that if our publick Service were by the Minister performed without the Surplice, if Baptism were administred by him without the Cross, if the Sacrament of the Lords Supper were administred to such as did not kneel, but stand at the receiving of it; these actions would not be performed sinfully, or with defect of any real goodness which belongs to them, nor indecently, disorderly, or irreverently. So that his description of positive Order, Reverence, and Decency, resolves it self into two Propositions: That no Ceremonies have any positive Order, Decency, or Reverence, the use of which does not (1) make the Worship more decent, reverent, and orderly, than otherwise it would be, *i. e.* than it would be in the use of any other Ceremonies, but those particular Ceremonies about which the Controversie is; where the fallacy seems to lie: And the neglect of which does not (2) make the Worship irreverent, indecent, and disorderly. Now though it is in my nature to be very civil to Reconcilers, yet I cannot grant him either of these Propositions.

As for the first, I suppose our Reconciler will grant that it is possible there may be different degrees of Order, Decency, and Reverence; and that religious actions may be performed orderly, decently, and reverently, with some Ceremonies, though there may be other Ceremonies more orderly, decent, and reverent; and therefore there may be positive Order, Decency, and Reverence in those Ceremonies,

monies, the use of which makes the Worship orderly, decent, and reverent, though it does not make it more orderly, decent, and reverent, than otherwise it would be.

As for the second, there may be a less orderly, decent, and reverent way of performing religious actions, which yet cannot strictly be called irreverent, indecent, or disorderly; or there may be several sorts of Ceremonies which may equally contribute to the reverent, decent, or orderly performance of religious actions; and then the neglect of any one sort of Ceremonies may not make the action indecent, irreverent, or disorderly, while we use other Ceremonies equally reverent or decent: and therefore it cannot be true, as he affirms, that no Ceremonies have any positive Order, Decency, or Reverence, which being undone, the Service is not irreverently, indecently, and disorderly performed.

As to explain this by his own instances. The Surplice may be a very decent Garment for Religious Offices, and it may be the most decent of any other; and yet the Worship may not be performed indecently without the Surplice, if the Minister officiate in some other decent Garment: but should he leave off the Surplice, and put on a Colliers Frock, or a Buff-coat, I should think it very indecent and irreverent; what the Reconciler would think, I cannot tell. Thus the Cross in Baptism does very much contribute to the gravity and solemnity of the action; and yet Baptism is compleat and perfect without it, and may be

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administred very reverently and decently, if all other due circumstances be observed. Kneeling is a posture very expressive of our Reverence and Devotion, and therefore very proper for so sacred an action as receiving the Lords Supper; but standing and prostration are expressive of Reverence and Devotion also; and therefore those who do not kneel, but stand, when they receive, cannot be charged with irreverence. But now will any man in his wits say that there is no positive Order, Decency, or Reverence in a Surplice, or the Cross in Baptism, or kneeling at the Lords Supper, because it is possible that these religious actions may be performed decently with other decent Ceremonies or Circumstances, without them?

But our Reconciler, though he may be a very charitable man, yet is not very honest, but manifestly puts tricks upon his Readers: otherwise, why does he oppose *standing* at the Lords Supper to kneeling, and not rather *sitting*, which is the onely posture used by our Dissenters? The French Protestants indeed receive standing; but what is that to our Dissenters, who would no more receive standing than kneeling? for the same Objections which they urge against kneeling, are as good against standing: That it was not the posture used by Christ at the institution of this Sacrament: That it is not a Table-posture, and therefore not proper at a Feast: That it is used as a posture of Worship, and therefore they may worship the Host as well standing as kneeling.

kneeling; for if it be not used as a posture of Worship, it is no more expressive of Reverence than sitting. Now why does not our Reconciler say that the Sacrament of the Lords Supper may be received as reverently sitting as kneeling, but inst. ad of *sitting*, which is the case of our Dissenters, whose Cause he undertakes, puts in *standing*? I can imagine no other reason but onely this, That he was very sensible that sitting was no reverend posture, (not used by them as a posture of Worship; for then it is liable to the same Objections as kneeling is, for they might worship the Host as well sitting as kneeling; and yet if they do not worship sitting, they confess that they do not worship Christ no more than the Host, when they approach the Lords Table): and therefore he puts in *standing*, which is not kneeling indeed, and yet is expressive of Reverence. And is not this a plain confession, that the onely case wherein decent and reverent Ceremonies may be neglected, and yet the Worship not be indecent and irreverent, is when other decent and reverent Ceremonies are used in their room; but if they lay aside reverent Ceremonies, and use irreverent ones, the Worship becomes irreverent also? The external Decency and Reverence of religious actions, consists in the Reverence and Decency of those Circumstances and Ceremonies wherewith they are performed. Where there is choice of such decent Modes and Ceremonies of Worship, the neglect of any one decent and reverent Mode or Cere-

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mony cannot make the action irreverent or undecent, but the neglect of all does. Had our Reconciler said that all those Ceremonies had a positive Order, Decency, and Reverence, without some or other of which, the Worship would be indecently, irreverently, or disorderly performed, he had said very true; and this would have justified the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, and all the decent Ceremonies of any foreign Churches in all Ages. But it is a manifest Fallacy, to say that the particular Ceremonies which are used in the Church of *England*, have no positive Order, Decency, or Reverence, because the acts of Worship may be performed orderly, decently, and reverently without them; which our Church always owned: for she never condemned the Worship of other Churches which do not use her Ceremonies, while by other means they secure the external Decency and Reverence of Worship. But the Question is, Whether the Ceremonies enjoined by the Church of *England*, or some other decent Ceremonies in the room of them, be not necessary to the external Decency and Reverence of Worship? Whether we can worship decently and reverently, without some decent habits, postures, places, &c? Whether the Ceremonies used by the Church of *England*, be not as decent and reverent as any other? We do not pretend that our Ceremonies are the only decent and reverent Ceremonies that can be used in religious Worship; then indeed his Argument had been strong, That those

those who do not use them, must worship God irreverently and indecently : but we say they have a positive Decency and Reverence, and that those who worship God according to the Prescriptions of our Church, observe an external Decency and Reverence of Worship. But this he says not one word to, and therefore I presume cannot ; for he has given evidence enough, that he never wants will, but when he wants power, to be civil to the Church of *England*.

And therefore he might have spared his pains in proving that God may be decently and reverently worshipt, without the use of the English Ceremonies ; for no body ever said otherwise that I know of : and the very Argument whereby he proves It, plainly shews that the Church of *England* is of that mind ; for she asserts these Ceremonies to be indifferent and alterable : whereas, as he well urges, they could be neither, if they were absolutely necessary to the Decency and Reverence of Worship.

But before I proceed, it will be necessary, for the clearer stating of this matter, to consider the several kinds of Decency, and upon what account we assert, That our Ceremonies have a positive Decency in them. Now we may distinguish between the decency of circumstances, and the decency of things or actions. No action can be performed without some circumstances, and no action can be decently performed without decent circumstances, such as time, and place, and posture, and habit ; and

this is as absolutely necessary as the Decency of publick Worship is. And to this Head of decent circumstances we reduce the Surplice, which is a decent habit for the Minister when he performs the publick Offices of Religion; and kneeling at the Lords Supper, which are two of the three Ceremonies of the Church of England. The Cross in Baptism, which is the third Ceremony, is not a circumstance of action, and therefore has not the same kind of Decency, nor the same necessity that the other Ceremonies have; but it is to be considered as a decent thing or action. Now these two being of so distinct a nature, must be considered distinctly also; and therefore I must advertise my Reader, that what I shall now discourse about the Decency of Worship, and the necessity of it, concerns onely the decent circumstances of religious actions; such as the Surplice and kneeling at the Lords Supper are. As for decent things or actions, such as the signe of the Cross is at Baptism, I shall discourse of that distinctly by its self. Having premised this, let us now return to our Reconciler.

Pref. p. 2. This modest man, who is so sensible of his own weakness and proneness to mistake in judging, who is so unwilling to do the least disservice to the Church of England, who has such a hearty honour for his Reverend Superiours; yet with great humility ventures to confute and expose all the Savoy-Commissioners, who were very grave and reverend Persons.

Reconcil. p. 39.

The Commissioners observed, *That the Apostli*

possible hath commanded that all things be done decently, and that there may be uniformity; let there be with a Rule and Canon for that purpose: And hence, he says, they infer, that though charity will move to pity and relieve those that are perplexed and scrupulous, that we must not break Gods commandment in charity to them; and therefore we must not perform publick Services indecently and disorderly for the sake of tender Consciences. Which, he adds, is expressly said, to justify their refusal to abate the imposition of the Ceremonies, especially these three, the Surplice, the signe of the Cross, and Kneeling.

This seems to me to be very wisely and judiciously urged by our Commissioners; but our Reconciler thinks they have greatly over-shot themselves, when they assert, That by abating the use and imposition of these Ceremonies, they should break Gods Commandment, and perform publick Service indecently and disorderly. Truly I think this is a little too much; and our Author has loaded it with a great many hard consequences, which I see not how they can answer: but the best of it is, that the Commissioners never said any such thing: I am sure there is no such thing contained in the words cited by him, which he reduces to this absurd Proposition.

But do not they say, that they must not break Gods Command in Charity, and therefore must not perform publick Services indecently and disorderly for the sake of tender Consciences? Yes, they do say so. And was not that said to justify their refusal to abate the

the imposition of the Ceremonies? Suppose that too. Does not this then signifie, that by abating the use or imposition of these Ceremonies, they shall break Gods Commandment, and perform publick Service indecently and disorderly? By no means. This is onely one instance of our Author's *proneness to mistake in judging*; which I wish he were more thoroughly sensible of, and that would make him more modest without a complement.

The Commissioners assert very truly, That the Apostle commands that all things be done decently and in order. This they take to be Gods Command, as well they might; and therefore it is a breach of Gods Command to perform publick Services indecently and disorderly; and charity does not oblige them to break any Command of God, and therefore they must not do this for the sake of tender Consciences. All this I presume our Reconciler himself will acknowledge. What then is the fault? Why the Commissioners urge this upon occasion of the Dispute about abating the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*; and therefore it proves, that they thought the Worship of God could not be decently and reverently performed, without those particular Ceremonies: for otherwise their Argument is not good. Yes, say I, the Argument is very good without this Supposition; and therefore the Reconciler's consequence is not good. For I would ask him one plain Question: Can any particular Church urge this Rule of the Apostle, that
all

all things be done decently and in order, in justification of their imposition of some indifferent but decent Rites and Ceremonies in religious Worship, which are not commanded by God? If any Church may, why not the Church of *England*? unless he can prove that our Ceremonies are indecent, irreverent, and disorderly. If they may not, then the Apostles Rule signifies nothing; for it will not justify the Governours of the Church in taking care of the Decency and Reverence of Worship. And if this Rule will justify any one Church in appointing decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship, it will equally justify all the Churches in the World in their Rites and Ceremonies, how different soever they be from each other, so they be all decent and reverent. And yet I suppose, should the Advocates of any particular Church, as for instance, the Commissioners of the *Savoy*, urge this Apostolical Rule in vindication of the Ceremonies of their own Church, no man in his wits would hence conclude, that they did believe the particular Ceremonies of their Church to be the Command of God, and that religious Worship could not be decently or reverently performed without them, which would be to condemn all other Churches which did not observe the same Rites and Ceremonies with themselves. And thus all the several Churches in the World, which enjoyn nothing but what contributes to the external Decency and Solemnity of Worship, may by the Apostles Rule justify themselves; and yet, according to

to this way of arguing, cannot justify themselves, without condemning all other Churches; which I confess is very hard to my understanding.

Does not such a general Rule for the Decency of Worship, require that there should be some particular Rules of Decency and Order prescribed? Does not such a general Rule suppose that there may be several Rules given, several Rites and Ceremonies of Worship prescribed, differing indeed from each other, but all complying with the general Rule of Decency and Order? for that is a strange general Rule, which contains but one particular under it. Does not such a general Rule suppose that the choice of particulars is left to the prudence of Ecclesiastical Governours, while they keep themselves within the general Rule? And is not the true reason of this general Rule, and consequently of those particular Rules and Orders for Worship which are prescribed by vertue of this general Rule, to prevent a disorderly, irreverent, indecent performance of religious Worship? And may not Church-Governours then assigne this as a reason why they prescribe these Rules, and why they will not alter them, because they must not perform the publick Service indecently and irreverently? If they may, then their saying so does indeed suppose that those Ceremonies which they prescribe, are decent and reverent; but it does not suppose that there are no other decent or reverent ways of performing religious offices, and that whoever does

does not use those Ceremonies which they institute and command, must be guilty of an indecent and irreverent performance of publick Worship. For that would be to overthrow the main Principle by which they act, which is the authority of a general Rule, which does not prescribe the particular Rules of Decency and Order; and therefore supposes that there may be several, and that every Church has liberty to chuse for her self.

In short, I would desire our Reconciler to consider, that if Church-Governours must not prescribe any particular Rites and Ceremonies to prevent the disorders and indecencies of Worship, while there are any other Rites and Ceremonies as decent and orderly as those which they prescribe, then this Apostolical Rule signifies nothing; for it can never be reduced into practice. As for instance, suppose the French Protestants enjoyn standing at receiving the Lords Supper, or at publick Prayers, as the Primitive Church did on the Lords days, and should assigne this reason for it, that they must not suffer the Worship of God to be indecently or irreverently performed, and so break that Commandment, *Let all things be done decently and in order*; presently our Reconciler has seven Arguments to oppose against them, though they may all be reduc'd to one: That this makes standing at the Lords Supper not to be an indifferent Ceremony of humane institution, but necessary in its own nature, and by a divine command antecedent to all humane Authority, and that which

Reconc. p 39,
40.

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which no humane Authority can alter ; and therefore a necessary part of Worship. For how can they say that they require their Communicants to receive standing, in obedience to a divine command, and because they must not worship God irreverently and indecently, unless they believe that standing at the Lords Supper is not an indifferent Ceremony, but such a necessary posture, that he who does not stand at receiving, breaks the Command of God, and receives irreverently and indecently ? And thus the French Church is utterly ruined, and must no longer enjoyn standing at the holy Communion. Well, the Church of *England* requires kneeling for the same reason that the French Church requires standing, and therefore the same Arguments are good against her ; and should any man have the confidence to use the same reason for sitting, that they must not worship God irreverently and indecently, the same Arguments would hold good against them also. So that here is a general Rule given to Church-Governours, to take care to preserve Decency and Order in the Worship of God, and all the parts of it, and yet no Church-Governours can reduce this to practice ; for a general Rule cannot be reduced to practice but by particular Rules and Orders ; and yet whoever prescribes any particular Rules of Decency and Order, and insists on them to prevent irreverence and indecency in Worship, falls under our Reconcilers censure, and is *with all humility intreated* to answer seven terrible Arguments in his own vindication.

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The plain Answer to our Reconciler then is this: That the Governours of every Church are, by vertue of this Apostolical Command, required to prevent the indecency and irreverence of publick Worship; and they have no other way of doing this, but by prescribing some particular Rules of Decency and Order: And though the constitutions and usages of severall Churches may be very various and different from each other, yet every constitution which is decent and orderly, prevents the indecent and irreverent performance of publick Worship; and therefore all Church-Governours may justifie such Impositions as the Commissioners at the *Savoy* did, by saying, that they must not break Gods Commandment, and therefore must not suffer the publick Service to be indecently and irreverently performed; and therefore must prescribe some particular Rules of Order and Decency, without either making their own Rites and Ceremonies essential to the Decency of Worship, or censuring and condemning the decent usages and customs of other Churches.

But since great part of this Controversie turns upon this hinge, that it is a very trifling and inconsiderable thing to prescribe Rules for Habits, Postures, or Gestures in the Worship of God, much more to institute any significant and symbolical Rites and Ceremonies; that such things have no real and positive goodness in them, and therefore are not worth contending for: I shall discourse this matter more particularly, and shall, 1. shew how necessary

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cessary some decent Rites and Ceremonies are to the external Decency of Worship; which will justify the Governours of the Church in such Impositions. 2. Wherein the Decency of religious Worship consists; which will justify the Ceremonies in use among us, as having a positive Order, Decency, and Reverence. 3. I shall consider how our Reconciler states this matter.

First. How necessary some decent Rites and Ceremonies are to the external Decency of Worship.

For though any one particular Habit, or Posture, or Gesture in religious Worship, is so far indifferent as it is no-where expressly commanded; yet a decent Habit and Posture, &c. is not indifferent, but as necessary as external Worship is, and expressly commanded by this Apostolical Rule, *That all things be done decently and in order.* If men will acknowledge that God requires publick, external, and visible Worship, as well as the Worship of the Mind and Spirit, which I have largely discoursed elsewhere; it is certain there can be no visible Worship, but by external and visible signs of honour; for the internal Devotion of the mind cannot be seen by men, though it be seen by God; and therefore is not external and visible Worship. Can that man be said to pay any visible Honour or Worship to God, whose words and actions, postures and behaviour, signify nothing of Honour or Reverence?

We know of what mighty consequence the

See Pract. disc.
of religious
Assembl. s. 2.

See Defen. of
Dr. Still. Unr.
of Separ. p. 30:

the Ceremonies of State are, and how punctual Princes are in exacting them; and when we remember that no Prince can be so jealous of his Honour as God is of his Worship, we cannot think that the publick Solemnities and external Decency of Worship are such inconsiderable things, when the glory of God is so nearly concerned in them. For the external and visible glory of God consists in external and visible Worship; and external Worship is nothing else but external significations of Reverence and Devotion.

And therefore though the particular modes and circumstances of Worship are not particularly prescribed by God, yet some particular Rites of Worship for external Decency and Order, are necessary, and ought to be prescribed by those who have the care of publick Worship. For if the external Decency of Worship be necessary by an Apostolical Precept, and yet this external Decency cannot be secured without some particular Rules of Decency and Order; then some such particular Rules are as necessary as Decency and Order is; and whatever external Rites do contribute to the Decency and Order of Worship, have all that real goodness in them which there is in Decency and Order: and no man can truly say, that any such Rites and Ceremonies have no real goodness in them, wherefore they ought to be commanded, without asserting at the same time, that there is no real goodness in Decency and Order: for if they are decent and orderly, they must have all that real

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goodness which is in Decency and Order. For it is a manifest Fallacy, to argue that such or such Rites or Ceremonies are in their own nature indifferent, and not commanded by any positive Law of God, and therefore have no real or necessary goodness in them; when the end for which they serve is not indifferent, but necessary, and expressly commanded by God. For I cannot see but that these men, if they pleased, might as well prove that those Rites and Ceremonies which serve the ends of Decency and Order, are not indifferent, but necessary, by vertue of that Law which enjoins the external Decency of Worship, as that they are not necessary, but indifferent, because they are not in particular commanded by God. For the same Law which makes the external Decency of Worship necessary, makes the use of decent Rites necessary, because the end cannot be attained without the means; but the natural indifferency of things does not make them indifferent in their use, when they are to serve a necessary end.

But the fallacy of this consists in the equivocal use of these terms, *real goodness*, *necessity*, *indifferency*; which therefore I shall briefly explain, and apply to the present Controversie.

Real goodness may respect the intrinsic nature, or the use of things: In the first sense we call all moral Vertues *good*, which have an intrinsic and eternal reason, such as Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, and all those natural acts of Homage and Worship which

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we owe to God: and in this sense, no Habits, Postures, or Gestures, have any real goodness in them: for they are no acts nor parts of Worship. This turns all these external observances into superstition (which our Saviour charged the Pharisees with of old, and which we very justly charge the Church of Rome with at this day) when we place such Virtue and Sanctity in these things, as to advance them into proper Acts and Ministries of Religion; the very doing of which, is as acceptable, or more acceptable to God, than the most real and natural acts of Homage and Worship.

But then there are other things which have no natural nor intrinseck goodness in them, which yet may be properly enough called, and are really good, with respect to their use, and the end they serve, if the end be good; and such are those external Rites and Ceremonies which conduce to the decent and orderly performance of religious Worship: For if the external Decency of Worship be good, then those Ceremonies wherein the external Decency of Worship consists, must be so far good also, and fit to be commanded.

The like may be said about the different kinds of necessity, as far as it concerns this matter. For some things are necessary in their own nature; as all those things are which have an internal and immutable goodness, and being founded on eternal reasons: other things which are not necessary in their own nature, yet may be necessary by a divine

and positive Institution ; as the Levitical Sacrifices and Ceremonies were under the Mo-
 saical Law, and as the Christian Sacraments
 are under the Gospel : other things are nei-
 ther necessary in their own nature, nor by a
 positive Law, which yet may be necessary as
 means in order to a necessary end. And here
 are two degrees of necessity : 1. When the
 means is so absolutely necessary to the end,
 that the end cannot be obtained without it ;
 as it is in all those cases where there is but one
 way of doing a thing, which makes that one
 way as absolutely necessary as the thing it self
 is ; as, if there were but one Road from *Lon-*
don to *York*, it would be as necessary to travel
 that Road, as it is to go to *York* : but there
 are very few such cases as these in matters of
 Morality. But, 2. There is another kind of
 necessity, when there are various means e-
 qually fitted and suited to attain the same end ;
 as in the case before us : the external Decency
 of Worship is necessary, but yet there may be
 different Rites and Modes of Worship, which
 may be all very decent. Now in this case all
 these Rites and Ceremonies are on different
 accounts both necessary and indifferent. They
 are necessary, considered as to their general na-
 ture and use, as they are decent Rites and Ce-
 remonies of Worship, because the Decency of
 Worship is necessary ; they are indifferent,
 considered as such particular Rites and Modes
 of Worship, because there are other decent
 ways of Worship besides them. As to shew
 this in a parallel case : All wholsom Food is
 necessary

necessary to preserve life and health, and yet no one particular kind of Food, considered as such a particular kind, is necessary to our life and health, because men may live very healthfully who use very different Diets; but yet considered as to its general nature, as wholesome Food: and so we may say of any particular Diet, that it is necessary to our life and health. Every particular sort of wholesome Diet has the necessity of a means and cause, which can produce the effect, though not the necessity of an only cause, without which the effect cannot be produced. And this is a true degree of necessity, though not an absolute necessity. It is sufficient to justify any man in using any wholesome Diet, and to justify any Church in choosing and determining any decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship. Food is necessary to preserve our lives, and external Decency is necessary in religious Worship; but no particular sort of Food is so necessary that we cannot live without it, nor any particular Ceremonies so necessary that we cannot worship God without them; but yet they have the necessity of a cause to produce the effect, which is all the necessity things of this nature are capable of, the necessity of a means to an end, though not of an only means: and therefore they cannot be called indifferent, with respect to producing the effect, for they have a proper and necessary influence on the effect; but they are indifferent only with respect to other causes, which can equally produce the effect.

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But this will be better understood by considering the several kinds of things indifferent. Some things are indifferent in their own nature, as being neither morally good nor evil; or with respect to a divine Law, as being neither particularly commanded nor forbid: and upon both these accounts the particular Ceremonies of Religion may be called indifferent things. But then these indifferent things, which considered absolutely in their own nature, are neither morally good nor evil, nor particularly forbid nor commanded by God; yet with respect to some end they are fitted to serve, or as they are reducible to some general Law, may lose this absolute indifference of their nature, and be capable of being advanced to be the Rites and Ceremonies of religious Worship. Thus for instance: a white, or black, or red Garment, are all indifferent Habits; standing, sitting, or kneeling, are all indifferent Postures; the like may be said of times and places: but when they come to be applied to Religion, they may not all be equally fitted to the Gravity, Decency, and Solemnity of religious Worship. And therefore by vertue of that general Law, *That all things be done decently and in order*, some of these Habits or Postures, times and places, are more proper to be made the Circumstances of Religion; and therefore are not wholly indifferent with respect to the Decency of Worship, because their natural or instituted signification makes them fitter for the Service and Ministries of Religion, than other things are; and there-

therefore antecedently to all Laws, have so much goodness and necessity in them, that they have an aptitude and fitness to serve the external Decency of Worship; and by virtue of that Apostolical Precept of Decency and Order, some or other of them must be used in publick Worship. But then since there may be different Rites and Usages which may equally secure the Decency of Worship, all these decent Rites and Modes of Worship may still be called indifferent, as considered in particular, and as compared with each other: for till the particular Circumstances of Religion are determined by a just Authority, either of them may be decently used; but none of them are indifferent, considered in their general nature as decent Rites and Ceremonies, and as compared with other Rites and Modes of Worship, which are indecent. The indifferency is not in the nature of the things, considered as decent, and as opposed to that which is indecent; but the indifferency is only in our choice, occasioned by the variety of decent Rites. It is not indifferent whether we will use any decent Ceremonies, or none; it is not indifferent whether we use decent or indecent Ceremonies; but the only indifferency is in a variety of decent Ceremonies which we will chuse.

From hence I hope by this time it appears, that all decent Rites and Ceremonies have such a goodness in them, as makes them fit to be commanded: for though they have no internal nor necessary goodness, considered ab-

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solutely in their own natures, yet with respect to the acts of Worship, they have the goodness of Decency, which is commanded by an express law, and is essential to publick Worship: and therefore they are not absolutely indifferent, as things which can neither do good nor hurt, which we may use or may let alone; but are necessary to the Decency of Worship, as means to an end, or as a cause is to produce its effect. We may safely say in general, that decent Rites and Ceremonies are necessary to publick Worship, because publick Worship cannot be performed decently without them; and the reason why we cannot say this of any particular Ceremonies, is not because they are absolutely indifferent in their own nature considered as decent, but they are indifferent as to our choice and election, when there is a variety of such decent Ceremonies: for in this case the Governours of the Church are not confined to any one decent Garb or Posture, but may command the use of any one that is decent. But yet this is no Argument against any particular Ceremonies, that they have not so much goodness or necessity, that they ought to be commanded, because there are other Rites and Modes of Worship as decent as they: for this Argument will hold against all particular Ceremonies considered in particular, and so no particular Ceremonies of Decency must be commanded; and yet this general notion of the Decency of Worship can never be put in practice, but by the use of some particular decent Rites.

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And I cannot but observe by the way, that the very name of indifferent things is very unduly and improperly given to those Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, which serve the ends of Decency and Order; and I doubt not but this has in part occasioned those fierce Disputes and Contentions about them. For indeed, indifferent things, which are upon all accounts indifferent, and have neither any good nor hurt in them, are by no means fit to be commanded in religious Worship; for this is to trifle in sacred things, which is contrary to the Decency and Gravity of Worship: but those Ceremonies which serve the ends of Order and Decency, are not indifferent things, but necessary, considered as decent. There must, upon some account or other, be an antecedent Decency in things, before they are fit to be commanded: Church-Governours must take care to maintain the Decency of Worship, but they must find things decent; for by their meer command they cannot make them so. All decent Rites and Ceremonies are, by the Apostolical Rule *to do all things decently and in order*, fitted and qualified to be made the Ceremonies of Religion, which nothing purely indifferent is; and all the Authority of Church-Governours in this matter, is onely to determine what particular decent Rites of Worship shall be used in their Church; that is, to apply the Apostles general Rule to particular instances.

I know very well how jealous and fearful most men are of owning any other necessity or obli-

obligation to observe the external Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, but what is derived from the Authority of Ecclesiastical or Civil Governours; and therefore no wonder if in an Age wherein the Authority of the Church is so much despised, and the Authority of the Prince in matters of Religion is absolutely denied, they fall under such a general Contempt. But I confess, I see no reason why any man should be afraid to own some kind of necessity antecedent to all humane Authority. For, as I have already proved, 1. The external Decency of Worship is absolutely necessary by an Apostolical Précept antecedent to all humane Authority. 2. This makes it necessary that some decent Rites and Ceremonies should be used in religious Worship. 3. This makes it necessary, that nothing but what is decent should be used. And therefore, 4. All particular decent Ceremonies have this necessity antecedent to all humane Authority, that some of them must be used in religious Worship, and no other must. And therefore, 5. When the Governours of the Church have determined which particular decent Ceremonies shall be used in religious Worship, these particular Ceremonies become necessary, not merely by Ecclesiastical Authority, but by virtue of the Apostolical Command, and their own natural Decency, which brings them within the compass of that general Rule. Church-Governours have Authority to apply that general Rule to particular Ceremonies, which have such Order and Decency as comprehends them with-

within that general Rule: But these Rites and Ceremonies, when they are fixt and determined, do not derive their obligation merely from the Authority of the Church, but from the Apostolical Canon; we must observe them not merely because the Church has commanded them, but because they are in themselves decent, and so comprehended within the Apostolical Canon; and therefore the proper Object of Church Authority. The Authority of the Church consists only in applying the Apostolical Authority to such particular Rites and Ceremonies, as by their own Decency are fit and qualified to be used in religious Worship; but it is the Apostolical Authority, as applied by the Church to such particular Ceremonies, which gives them their necessity and obligation.

Hence Mr. Calvin observes, that those Ecclesiastical Laws which relate to Discipline and Order, must not be accounted humane Traditions, because they are founded in this general Precept of *doing all things decently and in order*, and so receive their approbation as it were from the mouth of Christ himself.

Calvin in
1 Cor. 14. 40.

This, I think, is sufficient to shew that the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Religion have such goodness and necessity, that they ought to be commanded: for they have the goodness and necessity of Decency, which is enjoyed by an Apostolical Canon. But still the Controversie remains, what this external Decency of Worship is, and by what Rules we must judge of it: for one man may ac-

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count that decent, which another may think has no positive Decency at all; as it is in our present case. The Church of England retains the use of some Ceremonies for the sake of Decency; our modest Reconciler, who is very sensible of his own *proneness to mistake*, yet ventures to contradict the judgment of the Church; and affirms that there is no positive Order or Decency in the Ceremonies of the Church of England, wherefore they ought to be commanded. And therefore it will be necessary,

Secondly, To consider what the general notion of Decency in religious Worship is, and by what Rules we must judge of it.

Now in general, the external Decency of religious Worship consists in performing the Duties of Religion in such a manner as is expressive of Honour, Reverence, and Devotion. This, I suppose, will not be denied by any man who acknowledges any such thing as external Worship; but the difficulty is, by what Rules we must judge of external Honour and Reverence; and yet most men understand this very well also, when they speak of civil Honour. They know what Postures, what Actions, what Habit, what Behaviour, what Language, what Address, becomes them, when they approach their Prince, and their Parents, or any other Persons, whom they ought to honour or respect. And this suggests to us two general Rules to direct us in religious Worship.

1. That whatever would be deservedly thought

thought a breach of good manners in common Conversation, or a violation of that civil Respect and Honour which is due to Princes and all Superiours, can never become the Worship of God. What God tells the Israelites, who offered the blind, and the lame, and the sick in Sacrifice, holds good in all other cases: *Offer it now to thy Governor: will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of Hosts, 1 Mal. 8.* Such words, and actions, and behaviour, as would be an affront to the Majesty of a Prince, do much more unbecome religious Worship, because God is much greater than the greatest Prince.

2. That whatever is a necessary expression of our Honour and Reverence to men, as far as it is agreeable with the nature of religious Worship, is in a peculiar and eminent degree due to Almighty God. Many of the external expressions and signs of Honour both to God and man, must of necessity be alike, and if not the very same, yet of the same kind and nature. For whether we intend to honour God or men, it must be done by some visible signs of Honour which are not necessarily determined either to religious or civil Worship, but applicable to both. If it be a sign of Honour to our Prince, to be uncovered in his presence, to deliver our Petitions upon the knee, to come in a decent apparel, to put on a grave and modest countenance, to keep our distance, &c. that is, if we must express our Reverence for our Prince in our words and gestures, in our looks, and habit, and deportment of our selves

selves while we are in his presence, we must honour God too in the same manner; that is, by the gravity and reverence of our words and actions, postures, habits, behaviour, &c. when we approach his presence. There may be indeed, and is, a great difference between the particular expressions of civil and religious Honour: that which may become a Prince, is not always fit for religious Worship; and that which is proper for the Worship of God, must not always be given to Princes. But the Comparison consists only in this, That since the external signs of Honour consist in our words, postures, looks, habit, behaviour, and such-like external circumstances of action, as he who does not observe such a good decorum in all these, as is required in civil Honour, affronts the Majesty of his Prince; so does he who neglects such a Decency in these things, as is proper to religious Honour, profane the Worship, and pollute the Name and Majesty of God. But still we want some Rule whereby to determine what that Decency is in these external Circumstances, which is proper for religious Worship: and to explain this, I shall lay down these three Rules.

- I. That the external Decency of Worship consists in a peculiar regard to the Majesty of that God who is the sole Object of our Worship.
- II. In a regard to the particular nature of those acts of Worship in which we are employed.

III. In a regard to the quality, conditions, and relations of those Persons who worship God.

I. The external Decency of Worship consists in a peculiar regard to the Majesty of that God who is the sole Object of our Worship. This Rule God himself gives us by the Prophet Malachi: *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a father, where is my honour? if I be a master, where is my fear?* Which plainly signifies, that we must worship God in such a manner as is expressive of a just Honour and Reverence for his excellent Majesty: As he adds, *For I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the heathen.* Now we express a just regard to the Majesty of God, these two ways.

1. When we worship him with all the external significations of Awe and Reverence. When our words and actions, postures and behaviour, declare to all the world what a great sense we have of the Majesty of God, and that infinite distance which is between him and us; that is, when our words are few and wise, as *Solomon* directs; when we worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, and not onely bind our hearts but our bodies to him, and are very cautious of being guilty of the least indecency in his presence.

2. Then we honour the divine Majesty, when we worship him in a peculiar and appropriate

propriate manner, and do make a visible distinction between the Worship of God, and all the other actions of our lives. The sanctification of Gods Name consists in the peculiarity of his Worship, when we separate him from all other beings, and ascribe incommunicable and eminent Perfections to him; and therefore that Worship is most suitable to the divine Majesty, to his peculiar and incommunicable Perfections, which is performed in the most peculiar and distinguishing manner.

We know the Worship of God under the Law was by his own command performed in the most peculiar and appropriate manner; by peculiar persons, by *Aaron* and his Sons, and the whole Tribe of *Levi*, who were separated to the service of the Altar and Tabernacle, in a peculiar place, at the Tabernacle or Temple; and at peculiar and appropriate times, the seventh-day-Sabbath, and those other annual Festivals; and by peculiar Rites and Ceremonies. The Priests had their peculiar Garments to minister in before the Lord, and all the Vessels and Utensils of the Tabernacle were appropriated to those uses: not to mention now their Sacrifices, and Oblations, and Incense, &c. Now though these Persons, Times, Places, Rites, and Ceremonies, which by the Law of *Moses* were appropriated to the Worship of God, had something mystical and typical in their signification, yet the appropriation of peculiar Persons, Times, Places, and Habits, to the worship of God, is not mystical and typical; but besides other uses it may serve,

serve, is the natural Decency of Worship, and that which the peculiar Excellencies of God, and the peculiarity of the divine Worship requires.

The Light of Nature instructed all mankind in this, as much as in the necessity of religious Worship; insomuch that there never was any Nation which paid publick and solemn Adorations to any Deity, but had their Priests, their Temples, their holy Garments, and other Ceremonies appropriated to religious uses. And if it be thought enough to say, that these men were Idolaters, and their Worship idolatrous, and therefore we cannot learn from them, what is proper and decent in the Worship of God; we ought to consider, that when the Devil set up for a God, he challenged divine Honours to himself, and therefore retained all the external form of religious Worship, though he corrupted it with impure, and obscene, and inhumane Rites. He would not have valued either Priests, or their Vestments, or Temples, or Altars, had not these been very necessary and essential to religious Worship, and always judged so by mankind. When a Rebel usurps the Throne, he usurps the Honour too of a natural Prince; and when the Devil would be thought a God, he challenges such a Worship, as according to the general sense of mankind, is due to God, though he adapts the particular Rites and Ceremonies of it to his own impure nature, and barbarous and cruel inclinations.

As for appropriate Persons, Times, and Places,

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ces, I suppose our Reconciler will not dispute the fitness and decency of it under the Gospel : And there is as little reason why he should dispute the Decency of an appropriate and peculiar habit for religious Worship ; which God himself commanded under the Law, and which has been used in all Religions, and in the early Ages of the Christian Church. Appropriate Times and Places, are as Jewish as appropriate Habits ; and whoever considers the peculiarity of the divine Worship, cannot think it indecent, that it should be distinguished from other common actions by peculiar Times, and Places, and Habits, as well as Persons.

II. The Decency of Worship consists in adapting the Rites and Ceremonies of it to the nature of those particular acts of Worship in which we are employed. Thus, when we beg of God the pardon of our sins, or that he would bestow on us those Blessings which we want, it becomes us to do this with the greatest humility ; and therefore kneeling and prostration are very decent postures of Prayer, as being natural expressions of great modesty, and a just sense of our own unworthiness. When we profess our Faith in God, or offer up Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving, standing may be a very decent posture, as expressive both of our Reverence of God, and of the Vigour and Cheerfulness of our Minds. But I shall only instance here in kneeling at the Sacrament, which, with our Reconciler's leave, I must needs think a very decent Ceremony, both as it distinguishes it from a common Feast,

Feast, and is very agreeable to the nature of that holy Myſtery.

In this holy Supper we feaſt indeed at the Table of our Lord; but this is not a common and ordinary Feaſt, and therefore an ordinary Table-poſture does not become us, for this is not to diſcern the Lords body, that is, not to diſtinguiſh it from a common Feaſt. If the Decency of religious Worſhip conſiſts in peculiar and appropriate Ceremonies, certainly there ought to be ſome diſtinguiſhing marks on this myſterious Feaſt: And what more proper, than to receive our Pardon upon our knees, which is here ſealed and conveyed to us? What more proper, than in the higheſt act of Worſhip to our Saviour, to expreſs the greateſt humility of Soul and Body; and when we receive the greateſt and moſt ample favours from him, to acknowledge our own unworthineſs, and pay the loweſt Adorations to him? I could be tempted to ſay, that if any particular Ceremony in Religion be neceſſarily determined by an innate Decency and Fittneſs, kneeling at the Lords Table is.

III. The Decency of Worſhip conſiſts in a reſpect to the quality, conditions, and relations of thoſe who worſhip God. This Rule I learn from that reaſon the Apoſtle gives, why a man ſhould pray uncovered, and a woman covered, to ſignifie the natural Authority of the man, and Subjection of the woman. For the ſame reaſon he would not ſuffer a woman to ſpeak in the Church, becauſe they muſt be under obedience; for to teach, is an act of Au-

1 Cor. 11. 4,
5, 6, 7.

ch. 14. 34, 35.

1 Tim. 2. 11,
12.

4 Rev. 4.

7 Rev. 9.

19 Rev. 8.

thority, and therefore does not become her state of Subjection. And there are other cases to which this may be applied; but all that I shall at present observe, is the use of distinct Habits for separate and consecrated Persons in the Worship of God. The Apostle, it seems, thought it a piece of Decency, that their external Garb and Habit, when they worshipped God, should be proper and suitable to their state and condition; should represent and signify the Authority and Government of the man, and the Subjection of the woman. And then I would fain know a reason why this is not decent for the Ministers of Religion too, that they should perform the publick Offices of Religion in such a distinct Habit, as may both signify the peculiarity of their Function, and that holiness and purity of mind, which becomes those who minister in holy things. A white Linnen Garment has always been thought very proper for this purpose: the twenty four Elders, who sat about the Throne, are represented as clothed in white Linnen Garments: nay, that great multitude which stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb, were clothed with white Robes. Nay, this is one privilege which was granted to the Wife of the Lamb, that she should be clothed with fine Linnen clean and white. Which I alledge onely for this purpose, to shew that a white Linnen Garment is very proper for the Ministries of Religion, and very expressive both of the Honour and Purity of the Ministerial Function: for otherwise it would
not

not be represented as the habit of those Elders who sat round the Throne, nor as the habit of the Lambs Wife: for all these prophetic descriptions must borrow their figures and resemblances from earthly things. And if a white Linnen Garment were not proper to signify the Dignity, and Honour, and Holiness of such Persons, it could not properly be used to represent and signify that in Heaven, which it does not signify on Earth. And if a white Linnen Garment do very aptly signify both the Honour and Purity of such a Function, and it be a piece of Decency to use such Habits in religious Worship as are proper to the state, condition, or relation of the Worshippers, we may certainly conclude, that a Surplice or a white Linnen Garment, is a very decent Habit for the Ministers of Religion, when they perform the publick Offices of Religion.

I confess I cannot see what can reasonably be objected against this. For why should not the Ministers of Religion worship God in a Habit expressive of the Dignity and Holiness of their Office, as well as men and women in such Habits as signify the natural Honour and Dignity or Subjection of these different Sexes? Is not Religion as much concerned in the Honour and Purity of the Ministerial Office, as in such oeconomic relations? And is it not as fitting then to signify one, as the other, by distinct and appropriate Habits?

If it be said, that these external signs are nothing worth, and that the Honour of the Ministry is more concerned in the Purity of

their Lives, than in the whiteness of their Garments; this answer might have been given to *St. Paul* when he commanded the men to pray uncovered, and the women covered, That the Obedience and Subjection of Wives to their own Husbands is much more valuable than their praying covered, in token of such Subjection. But it seems *S. Paul* thought that the Decency and Solemnity of Worship did require the external signs and significations of this, though every body knows that a signe is not so valuable as the thing signified.

This, I hope, is a sufficient Vindication of those Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, which are also the necessary circumstances of action; and it is a wonderful thing that this should ever be a Controversie, whether the Governours of the Church have any Authority in these matters. The Dissenters themselves, at other times, will acknowledge that the Church has Authority to prescribe the necessary circumstances of action; and I take that to be necessary, without which an action cannot be performed, as, I think, it cannot be, without time, place, habit, and posture. And since different times, places, habits, postures, may be lawful, and some are necessary, it must be left to the prudence of Governours to determine which shall be observed according to the Rules of Decency and Order.

And when the determination of these things is necessary, it seems a more ridiculous thing to me, to quarrel with Habits and Postures for their signification, if they signifie well:

well : for there is no other Rule, that I know of, to determine the Decency of religious Circumstances, but by their signification ; as I think sufficiently appears from what I have already discours'd. That which signifies nothing, is neither decent nor indecent ; that which signifies ill, any thing unworthy of God, or unsutable to the nature of religious Worship, is indecent ; that which signifies well, the Devotion and Reverence of our Minds, our religious Awe for God, or that peculiar Honour we have for him, is a very decent Circumstance : and yet this is all which men raise so much Clamour about, under the formidable name of Symbolical Ceremonies.

See Defen. of
Dr. Still. Unr.
of Separ. p. 41,
42.

But as I observed before, there are another sort of Ceremonies which are not the necessary circumstances of action, but yet may be very decently used, and do contribute to the Gravity and Solemnity of religious actions. Of this nature is the signe of the Cross in Baptism, which is no necessary circumstance, for Baptism may be very decently and reverently administred without it ; but it is a thing very fitting and decent to be done at the time of Baptism, and which adds to the external Solemnity of it. Our Church has enjoynd no other Ceremony of this nature, but onely the signe of the Cross ; but yet it will be necessary to discourse something briefly about the nature, the decency, and lawfulness of such Ceremonies as these, and in particular about the Cross in Baptism.

First, As to the nature of these Ceremonies, I shall observe three things; which I presume will contain all that is necessary to be known about them.

1. That though they are symbolical and significant Ceremonies, they are not meerly for signification; that is, they are not meer Images and Pictures of things, which would transform Religion into an external piece of Pageantry. A great many such things indeed have been used, and are still in use in the Church of *Rome*; as, dressing up a Baby, and rocking it in a Cradle, as a Figure and Emblem of Christs birth, about the time of his Nativity, and such-like childish and ludicrous shows, which unbecome the Gravity and Simplicity of the Christian Religion. Such mean Representations as these, are onely for the entertainment of Children, but do mightily debase the Spirits of men, and detain them by earthly Figures and Similitudes from contemplating those sublime Mysteries. God never instituted such a Religion as this, nor did Christ and his Apostles give any countenance or authority to it. The Law of *Moses* indeed consisted of a great many significant Rites and Ceremonies, such as Circumcision, Washings, Purifications, Sacrifices, &c. many of which were instituted purely for their signification; but then the designe of it was to teach them by such external Rites those things, which at that time he did not think fit to give any express Laws about, nor to make a plain and clear revelation of. The Rites and Ceremonies

nies of their Law were either typical of Christ and the state of the Gospel, or had a moral signification to instruct them in those Evangelical Graces and Vertues, which God did not think fit then expressly to command. Now in such a dispensation as this, it did highly become the divine Wisdom by such external Signs and Figures to give some hints and intimations of diviner Mysteries, and a more excellent Philosophy, to devout and inquisitive minds: The designe of these legal Ceremonies was to teach them that by Hieroglyphicks, which it was not yet time to teach them by plain Precepts and expresse Revelations. But to transform the plain Precepts and Revelations of the Gospel into earthly Figures, is to teach men backward, to draw them off from the immediate contemplation of pure and naked Truth, to court a Picture and a Shadow, and to dote upon earthly Figures and Images of it. And therefore it is a reproach to the wisdom of the Mosaical Dispensation, to call such fooleries as these, Jewish Rites and Superstitions. There was a great deal of hidden and secret Wisdom contained in and taught by those Rites, which at that time they had no other way to learn; but such significant Ceremonies as are merely for signification, in the Christian Religion do only obscure and debate divine Mysteries, are wholly useless, when we are instructed in those things by plain and expresse Revelations, which these Ceremonies teach, or rather darken by earthly Figures; and they corrupt a Spiritual Worship, which hereby degenerates into external pomp and show.

2. These

2. These Ceremonies therefore, though they are significant, must not be meer teaching Signs, which are out of date under the Gospel, and a reproach to the clear Revelations and perfect light of it; but are visible signs and expressions of some Grace, or Vertue, or Duty, which we at that time exercise, or profess the exercise of. As to give you some instances of such Ceremonies as were both allowed and practised by Christ and his Apostles,

13 Joh. 4. 5.

1 Tim. 5. 10.

Christ washed his Disciples feet, as an Example of Humility as well as Kindness; which he recommended to their imitation; and this seems to be literally practised by them after his death, and was continued in some Churches to after-Ages. But now we must not look upon this Ceremony onely as a signe of Humility, but as a real exercise of it. In those Countries, to wash the feet of any man, was a servile work, and as mean an Office as they could do for one another; and therefore it was a visible exercise of Humility in our Saviour to do it, and so it was in them too, who imitated him in it; but did withal signifie all other acts of Kindness, Humility, and Condescension, which by that act of washing the feet they did profess to each other. And should men wash each others feet still, without the exercise of that Humility with which our Saviour did it, it would not be a religious Ceremony, but a ludicrous piece of Superstition.

Thus the Kifs of Charity, or the holy Kifs, which

which was used in the Apostles days, was not a meer significant Signe, but a real exercise and expression of that Brotherly love which they had, and which they expressed to each other; and those who kissed without this divine Charity, profaned the Ceremony. Thus the Love-Feast, which was in use also in the Apostles days, where all Christians, the rich and the poor, eat together at a common Table, was not onely a significant Signe of mutual Love, but an Exercise and a visible Profession of it; and therefore the Apostle severely re-proves them for such disorders at that holy Feast, as were inconsistent with that Brotherly Love and Charity which they profess'd in it.

Thus the signe of the Cross, as it is used in our Church at Baptism, is not merely for signification, but is a visible Profession of our Faith in a crucified Saviour, and a Promise and Engagement of our selves to take up his Cross, and to suffer as he did, rather than to deny him. *It is taken that we shall not hereafter be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his Banner against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and to continue Christs faithful Servants and Souldiers unto our lives end.*

But yet we must observe farther, that though these Ceremonies may be called religious Actions or Ceremonies, yet they are not properly acts of Religion in a strict sence, as that signifies acts of Worship. They are religious actions, as being done upon a religious account,

account, as being the Exercise or Profession of some Vertue; but we do not properly worship God in them, no more than we do by being meek, and humble, and charitable, and professing the Faith of Christ before men. To kiss each other, and to eat together at a common Table, is a civil action, and a testimony of civil kindneses and respects; but when this is done upon a religious account, as a testimony and expression of Christian Charity, it becomes a holy Kiss, and a religious Feast. These Ceremonies are as acceptable to God, as those Duties and Graces are which we exercise and profess in them, if we be sincere; but they are no parts nor acts of Worship, though performed in the time of Worship.

This short account of the nature of these Ceremonies, shews us what a ridiculous pretence it is to charge them with being Sacraments of humane Institution. Some tell us, that the definition our Church gives of a Sacrament, belongs to such Ceremonies as these; that it is *an outward visible signe of an inward spiritual Grace*; and here they stop, as if this were the full definition of a Sacrament: but our Church adds, *given unto us, and ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and as a pledge to assure us thereof*. So that there can be no such thing as a humane Sacrament, because there can be no Sacrament but what is ordained by Christ. True, say they, but that is the fault of it, that when upon other accounts it has the nature of a Sacrament,

ment, it has not that authority which should make it a divine, and therefore it is only a humane Sacrament. These Ceremonies then it seems would be Sacraments, if they had the authority of Christ: then there is one Sacrament more than they think of, viz. *washing the Disciples feet*; which was instituted by Christ himself, and is as much *an outward visible sign of an inward spiritual Grace*, as the Cross in Baptism, or any other significant Ceremony can be; but it wants what our Church adds to make up the nature of a Sacrament, that it is ordained *as a means whereby we receive this spiritual Grace, and as a pledge to assure us thereof*: Which shews, that no Ceremony, how symbolical soever it be, can be a Sacrament, which is not the Seal of a Covenant and Promise, and an instituted means for the conveyance of Grace.

But to let that pass; the nature of these Ceremonies does not consist in this, *That they are outward visible signs of an inward spiritual Grace*; but that they are the visible Exercise or Profession of some Grace or Duty. Their nature does not consist in being signifying signs to teach a Duty, but in signifying the actual Exercise or Profession of some Duty: and this, I suppose, does not make them Sacraments.

Secondly, Let us now consider the Decency of such Ceremonies, and I cannot imagine what dispute there can be about it. For if the Exercise or Profession of such Vertues be decent, then the external Rite and Ceremony whereby

whereby such a Profession is made, if it be used in a grave manner, and upon a solemn occasion, and be a proper and natural signe of such a Profession, must be decent too. If it be a decent thing for Christians to express their mutual love and charity to each other, when they come together to worship God, and to offer up their united Prayers to their common Father, or to feast at the Table of their common Lord and Saviour; then, to kiss one another, and to feast at a common Table, which are proper and significant expressions of mutual Charity, must be decent also at such times. And thus they were used by the Primitive Christians; they used to kiss each other after Prayers, upon which account it is called *Signaculum orationis*, or the Seal of Prayer. Thus they kissed each other before their receiving the Lords Supper, and began this mysterious Supper with a Love-Feast, which was a common Table for the poor and the rich. And if it were decent at such times to express their fervent charity to each other, the external Rite and Ceremony of this must be decent also: for inward Charity cannot be expressed but either by words or signs; and visible signs, which are also the external acts and exercise of Charity, are to be preferred before words.

Thus if it be decent upon some solemn occasions to make a publick profession of our Faith in a crucified Christ, and our resolution to follow him even to the Crofs, and rather to die with him than deny him; there cannot be

be a more solemn occasion for this, than at our Baptism, when we are received into the Communion of his Church, this being an express Condition of our Discipleship, to take up our Cross and follow him: and therefore also there cannot be a more proper signe and emblem of this Profession, than to receive the signe of the Cross in our foreheads: for, to receive the signe of the Cross, is a natural profession of our crucified Lord, and a suffering Religion; and to receive this signe in our foreheads, which are the seat of Modesty and Bashfulness, is a visible Profession that we are not and will not be ashamed of the Cross.

And as this is decent in it self, so it contributes to the Gravity and Solemnity of that religious Administration, as all awful, grave, and solemn Ceremonies do. If we consider this as the profession of the Person baptised, nothing can be more decent at such a time, than to confess a crucified Christ, (under whose command we then list our selves) and our resolution to fight under the Banner of the Cross. If we consider it as the Profession of the Church, who by her publick Ministers solemnly owns the Doctrine of the Cross, and declares it as the Condition of our Discipleship, when she receives any persons into the Communion of the Church; is there any thing unbecoming in this? Nay, can any thing be more comely and decent, than upon such solemn occasions to make such a solemn Profession of the Religion of the Cross?

Thirdly, As for the lawfulness of these Ceremo-

remories, I think there is no need to prove that, after what I have now discoursed; for they being nothing else but the visible Exercise or Profession of some Grace or Duty upon fit and solemn occasions, they cannot be unlawful, unless the external Acts and visible Profession of a known Duty can be unlawful. If it is our duty to make a publick Profession of our Faith in a crucified Saviour, no time can be more proper for such a Profession than the time of our Baptism, no signe can more naturally signifie this Profession than the signe of the Cross. Now I would gladly hear a wise reason, why it should be unlawful to make such a Profession as this at our Baptism, or unlawful to do it by signs as well as words. I would desire to know why we may not profess our Faith in a crucified Saviour by the signe of the Cross, as innocently and decently, as make our Appeals to God in an Oath, by laying our hand upon the Bible and kissing it. Nay, I would desire to know why the Church may not as well receive men into her Communion with the signe of the Cross, as a solemn Profession of a crucified Saviour, and a suffering Religion, as *Constantine* make the Cross his Banner and Royal Standard; and yet would any Christian refuse to fight under a General who bore the Cross in his Banner?

If you say, that this is onely a civil Signe and Ceremony, I deny it; and affirm, that it was as much a religious Ceremony as the signe of the Cross in Baptism; unless any man think that there can be no Religion in the Field,

Field, but onely in the Church. That which makes it a religious Ceremony either upon a mans forehead, or in the Emperours Standard, is, that it is done upon a religious account, as a publick and visible profession of our Faith in a crucified Saviour: and I think the Cross in the Emperours Standard displayed in the open Field in the sight of Pagans, is a more publick and visible Profession of the Cross, than what is privately transacted in the Church, and leaves no visible signe behind it. And I cannot imagine why any man should not as much scruple to fight under such a visible Banner of the Cross, as to receive an invisible signe of it upon his forehead, since the Profession, the Ceremony, and the Religion of it is the same.

It is true, such Ceremonies as these ought not to be numerous, nor too familiarly used, nor upon slight occasions; for this burdens Religion, and makes them degenerate into Superstition or Formality: But our Church has retained but one such Ceremony, and that used but once in a mans life, upon the most solemn occasion in the world, at our admission to Baptism: and it argues very little understanding in our Reconciler, to reproach the Church for this, and scornfully to ask, *Why she rejects crossing of the breast, and retains crossing in the forehead; why she rejects crossing at the consecration of the Eucharist, and the Baptismal Water, and retains it at the baptizing of the Infant; why she rejects Exorcism, Chrysom, Uction, Dipping, trine Immersion, and retains the Cross in* p. 297.

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Baptism. It does not become me to censure the Practice of the ancient Church in any of these Ceremonies; but I think, if the ancient Church cannot be condemned for these things, our Church cannot. One Ceremony is more easily justified than twenty; and the using of it once upon a very solemn occasion, than a too familiar use; especially where it cannot so properly be called a professing Signe: which is all I undertake for.

The onely Objection I can think of against the signe of the Cross in Baptism, as a professing Signe, is this: That there is no need of such a Profession as this, because we make the very same Profession at our Baptism, which represents and signifies our conformity to the Death and Resurrection of Christ; and therefore this is a vain and superfluous addition to the Sacrament of Baptism, and does tacitly charge that divine Institution with defect. I answer, The same Objection, for the very same reason, might have been made against the Love-Feast, which was celebrated at the very same time with the Lords Supper, to signifie that Brotherly love and charity which was and ought to be among the Disciples of Christ: and yet that heavenly Feast of the Lords Supper does not onely signifie our Union to Christ our Head, but our Union to each other, as Members of the same Body, and therefore required the actual exercise of Brotherly love in receiving. And yet this is acknowledged on all hands to be an Apostolical Institution, observed by the Apostles themselves,

and

and all the Apostolical Churches of those days.

The same Answer then will serve for both :
That Christian Love and Unity is included in the Supper of our Lord, and a patient suffering for the Name of Christ, in the Sacrament of Baptism ; but neither of these Sacraments were instituted to signify these Duties, nor do they signify them otherwise than collaterally and consequentially. The proper use of these Sacraments is not to signify and represent a Duty, but to convey divine Blessings and Virtues to us : The Pardon of our sins, and the Gift of the holy Spirit in Baptism, which incorporates us into the Body of Christ, and the continual supplies of Grace, and renewals of Pardon in the Lords Supper, where we feast on the Sacrifice of Christ, and partake in the Merits of it. But then as we all feast on the same Sacrifice of Christ, eat of the same Bread, and drink of the same Cup, this consequentially signifies, that we are Members of the same Body, and that we ought to love one another with the most tender and natural affections. But the mutual love and charity of Christians being so great a Duty of the Christian Religion, and so proper to be exercised at this time (for which reason they used also to kiss each other before receiving), and yet not directly and primarily represented in this holy Feast, the Apostles did not think it any derogation from the Lords Supper, to appoint a common Table for all Christians to eat at, as a Testimony and Exercise of mutual love and charity with each other. When we feast

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with any person, it is a direct signification that we are in a state of Friendship and Reconciliation with him at whose Table we eat; but it does not so immediately signify, that all the Guests who eat at the same Table are Friends to each other. It is reasonable indeed that it should be so, and God expects and requires that it should be so; and none are welcome at Gods Table, who do not come in perfect love and charity. But I say, the Lords Supper, considered as a symbolical Rite, does not primarily and directly signify it; and therefore the Apostles thought fit to signify and profess this by a common Table, where Christians first eat and drank together as Friends; and having thus testified their mutual kindness to each other, they were the better prepared to eat together at the Table of their common Lord and Saviour, and receive the Tokens and Pledges of his love to them all. So that this Love-Feast did not at all intrench upon the Lords Supper, it being instituted for a different end, though in subserviency to it.

And thus it is in Baptism. It is the Sacrament of our Initiation, whereby we are made Members of the Body of Christ, and intituled to all the Blessings of the New Covenant; but the external Ceremony of Baptism, whereby we are said to be implanted into the likeness of Christs death, does not primarily signify our laying down our lives for Christ, (though that be a necessary Condition of our Discipleship) but it signifies our new Birth, our spiritual

ritual conformity to the death of Christ, by dying to sin, and walking in newness of life; as *St. Paul* discourses in the 6 *Rom.* And therefore taking up the Cross being by Christ himself made, such an express Condition of our Discipleship, the Primitive Christians thought it very fitting to make a visible Profession of this, by receiving the signe of the Cross on their foreheads, at the same time that they were received into the Church by Baptism: which does no more derogate from the perfection of Baptism, than their tokens of renouncing the Devil with their faces towards the West, and spitting at him. Those constant Persecutions which in those days attended Christianity, made this a very useful and necessary Ceremony: And it may be observed, that no Christians in any Age of the Church, ever scrupled to receive the signe of the Cross on their foreheads, but those who think the Doctrine of the Cross now out of date, and can as profanely scoff at a suffering Religion, as the Heathens did at a crucified Christ: None but those, who profess Treasons and Rebellions for Christ, and never think it their duty to suffer, but when they want strength and power to fight for him; which gives little encouragement to Christian Princes to part with this symbolical Signe and Ceremony of a suffering Religion.

But there is one Objection which our Reconciler makes against the positive Order and Decency of these Ceremonies which are used in the Church of England, which is fit to be

Prot. Rec. p 38

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considered in this place; and that is, That Christ and his Apostles did not use them, and therefore they either worshipt God indecently, or the use of them is not necessary to the Decency of Worship. Now this is sufficiently answered by what I have already discours'd, That though the Decency of publick Worship be a necessary Duty, and some decent Rites and Ceremonies be necessary to the external Decency of Worship, yet where there is choice of such Ceremonies, which are very decent, we cannot say, that such or such particular Ceremonies are absolutely necessary, because the Decency of Worship may be preserved by the use of other decent Rites: and therefore Christ and his Apostles might worship very decently without the use of these Ceremonies, and the Church of England may worship very decently with them. But yet, to shew the folly of this Argument, we may consider,

1. That all the time Christ was upon Earth, he never set up any publick Worship distinct from the Jewish Worship. He lived in Communion with the Jewish Church, and worshipped God with them at the Temple, or in their Synagogues. And it is as pleasant a Argument to prove that there is no reason for using such Ceremonies now, because Christ did not use them, as it would be to prove that we must not use such Ceremonies as are proper to the Christian Worship, because they were not used in the Temple or Jewish Synagogues in our Saviours days: for he never performed any

any act of publick Worship any-where else.

But you will say, Christ instituted the Sacrament of his own Body and Blood, but he neither received kneeling himself, nor commanded his Apostles to do so. Now in answer to this, it is not evident to me, that Christ received at all himself, much less does it appear in what posture he received. It is said in St. Matthew and St. Mark, that after the institution of this holy Supper, when he had blessed the Bread and brake it, and divided it among his Disciples, and commanded them all to eat of it, and had likewise took the Cup, and having given thanks, commanded them all to drink of it, that he added, *But I say unto you, I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new with you in my Fathers kingdom.* From whence some may conclude, that he did at that time drink of the Cup, though he tells them it was the time he would drink of it. But St. Luke tells us, that these words were spoke at eating the Passover, before the institution of his last Supper, and then they are a plain demonstration, that he did not drink of the Sacramental Wine: and it is not likely that he should seat on the symbols of his own Body and Blood. But suppose he had, it had been as improper for him to have received kneeling, as it is decent in us to do so; for this had been an act of Worship to himself. And though we do not read in what posture the Apostle received, yet I am pretty confident they did receive in their ordinary eating po-

26 Mar. 29.

14 Mark 25.

22 Luke 15,

16, 17.

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sure. For it is very improbable, that our Saviour would require them to kneel; for he exacted no act of Worship from them while he was on Earth; they never prayed to him as their great High-Priest: and we may as well argue, that we must not pray to him now he is in Heaven, because he did not command his Apostles to pray to him while he was on Earth, as that we must not worship him when we approach his Table, nor receive that mysterious Bread and Wine with all humility of Soul and Body now he is in Heaven; because at the first institution of this holy Supper, while he was still visibly present with them, he did not command his Apostles to receive kneeling.

Nor is it likely the Apostles would do it of themselves, any more than that they put any other act of religious Worship to Christ on Earth: for though they heard the words of institution, yet at that time they understood nothing of the mystery of it; as it is impossible they should, who understood so little of his Death and Passion, much less of the meritorious Virtue and Expiation of his Blood.

2. As for the Apostles, who founded a Christian Church, and set up Christian Worship after the Death and Resurrection of our Saviour; what particular Rites and Ceremonies of Worship they used, we are not certain; though that they were careful of the Decency of Worship, is evident from this Apostolical Precept, *That all things be done decently and in order.* And their Love-Feasts are the holy
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Kiss, are a plain proof that they were not without their religious Rites also. And if we may judge of the Apostolical Churches by the succeeding Ages of the Church, even while they were under Sufferings and Persecutions, there was no Age of the Church: till the Reformation, so free from Rituals and Ceremonies, as the Church of England is at this day.

Thirdly, Let us now consider, how our Reconciler states this matter; and here I shall once for all examine whatever I can find in his Book pertinent to this Argument.

I. Now in the first place I observe, that our Reconciler agrees with Bishop Taylor. *That it is for ever necessary that things should be done in the Church decently and in order; and that the Rulers of the Church, who have the same power as the Apostles had in this, must be the perpetual Judges of it.* And he adds, *It cannot therefore rationally be denied, that the Rulers of the Church have power to command things which belong unto the positive Order and Decency of the Service of God.* This is so fair a Concession, that methinks we might agree upon it: but he immediately undoes all again, and says, *That this Command affords no ground for the imposing the Ceremonies now used in the Church of England, because it hath been proved already, that they have nothing of this nature in them; that is, nothing of positive Order or Decency.* But what he says has been proved already, I have made appear is not proved by him yet: and I hope I have proved the contrary. But if the Ceremonies of our Church, which are nothing else

Prot. Rec. c. 2.
p. 313.

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ells but the decent circumstances of action, or contribute to the Gravity and Solemnity of religious actions, have no positive Decency, and therefore cannot be prescribed by the Church; I desire to know what that positive Decency is, which the Church has authority to command; for if it does not extend to the determination of the necessary circumstances of action, I cannot see that the Church has any authority in matters of Decency. And if, as the Bishop says, *the Rulers of the Church are the perpetual Judges and Dictators in such matters*, which he seems to assent to, how does it become the great modesty of our Reconciler to assert, That there is no positive Decency and Order in those Ceremonies which the Church has appointed for the sake of Decency and Order? If the Rulers of the Church be the proper Judges of this, how does our Reconciler come by this authority to judge his Judges?

II. Our Reconciler adds a limitation of this Rule, *That all things be done decently and in order*, in the words of the same Reverend Bishop, *That it is not to be extended to such Decencies as are only ornaments, but is to be limited to such as only rescue from confusion. The reason is, because the Prelates and spiritual Guides cannot do their duty, unless things be so orderly that there is no confusion. But if it can go beyond this limit, then it can have no natural limit, but may extend to Sumptuousness, to Ornaments of Churches, to rich Vessels, to Splendour and Majesty: for all that is decent enough, and in some*
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Ibid.

circumstances very fit. But because this is too subject to abuse, and gives a secular power into the hands of Bishops, and an authority over men's estates and fortunes, and is not necessary for Souls, nor any part of Spiritual Government, it is more than Christ gave to his Ministers.

How much our Reconciler has injured this learned Prelate by his numerous citations of his words, to a quite different sense from what he intended, shall be made appear before I leave this Argument; though he has dealt no worse by him, than he has by Christ and his Apostles, whose words he has as grossly abused.

That this excellent Bishop had no design in this or any thing else which our Reconciler transcribes from him, to reflect on the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England, I have more than one reason to believe, as will appear presently: and therefore though I could not give an account of every particular expression, yet none but such a *Protestant Reconciler* would expound any of his words in contradiction to his declared sense of things. I am sure what he here says, if it be applied to the Ceremonies of the Church of England, has no reason in it; and that is a sufficient Argument to me, that he never meant it so. Far,

I. Supposing this to be true, *That this Rule is not to be extended to such Decencies as are only ornament*, this does not concern the Church of England, which has no such Ceremonies as are merely for ornament. And therefore the Church

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Church has authority enough to prescribe the decent Rites and Modes of Worship, though she have not authority to make her Worship gay and theatrical; which indeed is not decent, and therefore not contained within this Rule. The Bishop never thought of the Church of England, when he gave this Rule, but had his eye upon the fantastick Ceremonies and Attirements of the Romish Worship.

2. But yet when he says, *That this Rule is not to be extended to such Decencies as are only ornaments*, it is evident that he does not exclude all Ornaments neither, if they serve any ends of Religion beside. For if they be really such Decencies and Ornaments as become Religion and Christian Worship, I cannot imagine any reason why they should not be included in the Rule of Decency and Order. Such Decency and Order as is opposed to confusion and disorder, is always necessary, and may always be had, what state soever the Church is in, while there is any publick face of a Church. Ornamental Decencies cannot always be had, and therefore do not always oblige, as in the case of Persecutions. But why any man should say that the Authority of the Church does not extend to Ornaments, when it is in her power to adorn the Worship of God, I cannot guess. Must there be no difference between the afflicted, and prosperous state of the Church? When God has made in all other things a distinction between Necessaries, Conveniences, and Ornaments, does he allow nothing but what is barely necessary to

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his own Worship? It is possible indeed, that men may mistake in what they call the Ornaments of Religion, as the Church of Rome evidently does; but if they do not mistake, and have it in their power to give an external beauty and lustre to Religion, do they exceed their Commission in this too? The Bishop acknowledges, that *Sumptuousness, Ornament of Churches, rich Vessels, Splendour, and Majesty, is decent enough, and in some circumstances, very fit*; and I should much have wondered, had he denied it. Now when these things are decent and fit, does it exceed the Authority of the Church to appoint them? Can any thing be decent and fit to be done in any circumstances, which the Church has no Authority to do?

And therefore when he says, that mere Ornaments are not comprehended within the Rule of Decency and Order, he means no more by it, than that the Governours of the Church are not so strictly obliged to take care of the external Ornaments of Religion, which cannot be had at all times, as they are of the Decency and Order of Worship. Ornaments are very fitting, when they can be had; but the Bishop has not authority to oblige the People to the charges and expences of such Ornaments, unless they freely and willingly consent. And that this is his meaning, appears from the Reasons he gives of it: *That this is too subject to abuse, and that it gives a secular power into the hands of Bishops, and an authority over mens Estates and Fortunes*: Which

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are good Arguments only upon this supposition, that the Bishop had such Authority as to oblige his People to such expences as he should think fit for the Ornaments of Religion; but suppose devout people liberally contribute to such pious uses, if his Authority and Commission does not extend to Ornaments, he must not receive their money, nor adorn the Church with it; if he may, then his Authority extends to Ornaments, though he has no Authority over mens Estates: for he must not do any thing in the Church, which he has no authority to do. *But this is not necessary for mens Souls.* Right; and therefore not an absolute and necessary Duty: otherwise, how does it appear that the Bishops Authority extends onely to Necessaries? Why may not the Honour of God, and the external Beauty of his Worship, be considered in Religion, as well as the salvation of mens Souls? Why may not spiritual advantages find place in our Worship, as well as what is barely necessary? *But it is no part of spiritual Government.* Right; not to seize mens Estates to adorn the Worship of God. By these Reasons he proves, that *this is more Authority than Christ has given to his Ministers*: From whence we may easily learn what kind of Authority he means, such an absolute Authority to adorn Religion, as gives the Bishop authority over mens Estates for such pious uses. But Christ has given Authority to his Ministers to take care of the Decency of Worship; and therefore their Authority is of equal extent with the Decencies of Religion.

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3. When that Reverend Bishop says, *That Rule, Let all things be done decently and in order,* must be limited to such as solely rescue from confusion, he must have some larger notion of confusion than the usual signification of that word will justify: for men may avoid all confusion, and yet neglect all the natural Decencies of religious Worship. The Meetings of Quakers may be very orderly, without any confusion, and yet without any Decency. And the reason the Bishop alleges for this, *Because the Prelates and spiritual Guides cannot do their Duty, unless things be so orderly that there be no confusion,* is a very good reason against confusion; but is no reason at all to prove that the Rule of Decency and Order extends no farther than to rescue from confusion, in the common acceptance of the word: for there is something more required in religious Assemblies, than merely that the Bishop or Pastor may do his Duty without disturbance and confusion; viz. that the People worship God in such a decent manner as becomes the divine Majesty. The external Decencies and Solemnities of Worship, are an essential part of Religion, and therefore naturally belong to the care of Church-Governours, whether there had been any Law for it or no; much more when they are commanded to do all things decently and in order, we may reasonably conclude, that their Authority extends to whatever is truly decent in Religion.

But our Reconciler thinks that *this limitation of the words to matters done in confusion* P. 3, 4
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and disorder, may be plainly gathered from all the instances preceding, which gave occasion to the Rule, they being instances of great indecencies and disorders committed in the Church of Corinth: And from thence he tells us, *This only can be certainly collected, that when any thing is performed indecently and disorderly in the Service of the Church, the Rulers of it should correct them.* And to the same purpose, he urges an Argument of Mr. Jeane: *The words of the Apostle, Let all things be done decently and in order, are not disobeyed, unless there be some indecency committed in the Worship and Service of God, or some disorder in it: for Decency and Indecency, Order and Disorder or Ataxy, are privatively opposite; and between privative opposites in a capable subject, there is no medium; and therefore there is Decency sufficient in those actions where is no indecency.* But now by the omission of Symbolical Ceremonies of humane institution, such as the Cross in Baptism, Surplice in Prayer, Kneeling when we receive the Sacrament, there is committed no indecency in those parts of the Worship of God; and therefore the Apostles Precept is not disobeyed by the omission of such Ceremonies, and consequently this Precept cannot warrant the imposing of them.

I wonder how learned men can impose upon themselves and others with such silly Sophisms as these: for let us consider,

1. Suppose this Precept, *to do all things decently and in order*, were given upon occasion of those disorders and indecencies which were committed in the Church of Corinth, how does

does it hence follow, that the Apostle requires no other Decency than just what will remove the indecencies of Worship? Is Decency a thing valuable for it self, or onely as it is opposed to indecency? If the Decency of Worship be a good thing, (and if it be not, Indecency cannot be a fault) then it is a ridiculous thing to say, that the end of Decency is onely to prevent Indecency: as if the end of seeing, were onely to prevent blindness; or the end of Vertue, onely to prevent Vice. They tell us that Decency and Indecency are privatively opposite; that is, I suppose, that Indecency is the privation of Decency, not that Decency is the privation of Indecency: and therefore though the nature of Indecency consists in its opposition to Decency, yet the nature of Decency does not consist in its opposition to Indecency. Though we should allow that to be decent which is not indecent, yet it is not decent meerly because it is not indecent, but because it is agreeable to the Laws and Rules of Decency: And therefore though the Apostle gave this Precept upon occasion of these Indecencies committed in the Church of *Corinth*, yet the Command extends to any instances and degrees of Decency: for he does not command Decency meerly out of opposition to Indecency, (which is to invert the natural order of things) but for its own sake, as necessary and essential to publick Worship; as he who reproves the Vices of the Age, and exhorts men to the contrary Vertues, does not mean that they should onely practise so much

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Virtue as not to be guilty of these popular Vices, but that they should aim at the highest degrees and instances of Virtue.

2. And therefore those Rites and Ceremonies of Religion may be included in this Apostolical Precept, *to do all things decently and in order*; the omission of which, is not disorderly and indecent, if they be agreeable to the Laws and Rules of Decency; because the Decency of our Actions does not consist in its opposition to Indecency, but in conformity to the Rules of Decency. This is the principal Argument on which our Reconciler and Mr. Jeakes rely, to prove that the Ceremonies of the Church of England cannot be included in that Apostolical Precept of *doing things decently and in order*, because the omission of these Ceremonies is not indecent. If then (says the Reconciler) it can appear that praying without a Surplice, or receiving the Sacrament without kneeling, or baptizing without the Cross, is doing these things indecently and disorderly, then must it be confessed that this is a good warrant for the imposition of these things; but till this can be made appear, it must be vainly pleaded to that end. But now (says Mr. Jeakes) by the omission of symbolical Ceremonies of humane institution, such as the Cross in Baptism, Surplice in Prayer, Kneeling when we receive the Sacrament, there is committed no Indecency in these parts of the Service of God; and therefore the Apostles Precept is not disobeyed by the omission of such Ceremonies, and consequently this Precept cannot warrant the imposing of them. That the Apostolical

Apostolical Precept is not disobeyed by the omission of these Ceremonies, I readily grant; but not for his reason, that the omission of them is not indecent; for this Precept commands the positive Decency of Worship, as well as forbids the Indecency of it; but because the Decency of Worship may be secured by other decent Rites and Ceremonies, though these were omitted; but his *consequently* is a far-fetch'd one. The imposing any decent Rites may be warranted by this Precept, though the neglect of them be not indecent: for every decent Rite excludes Indecency, and makes the Worship decent; which is the sum of this Apostolical Precept. Decent Rites and Ceremonies are not opposed to the Indecency of omitting such Rites, but to other indecent Modes of Worship. Kneeling at the Sacrament ought not to be opposed to not kneeling, nor wearing a Surplice to not wearing a Surplice: for they cannot be opposed as doing a thing decently or indecently, but as doing or not doing a thing which may be decent or indecent according to the nature of things; but they must be opposed to other Postures or Habits in Worship: And such Rites as exclude Indecency, and have a natural Decency in them, are comprehended in this Rule.

3. As for his Logick, he tells us, *That Decency and Indecency are privatively opposite; and between privative opposites in a capable subject there is no medium, and therefore there is Decency sufficient in those actions where is no Indecency.* This our Reconciler calls a plain Argument;

which is nothing else but a plain Fallacy. For suppose we grant him that Decency and Indecency, Reverence and Irreverence, are privative Opposites, that is, opposed to each other as a habit, and its privation as sight and blindness; how does it hence follow, that there is Decency enough where there is no Indecency? Sight and blindness are privatively opposite; but will you say, that man sees well enough, who is not blind? Though there be no medium between a habit and a total privation, yet there are great degrees in habits; and no man thinks he sees well enough, though he be not stark blind, if his eye be weak and tender, or short-sighted, or wants the assistance of Spectacles, or other helps of Art. Thus though Indecency were nothing else but the privation of Decency, yet there are great degrees of Decency. And when the Apostle commands, *that all things be done decently and in order*, our Reconciler must prove that he meant only the lowest degree of Decency, which is but one bare remove from Indecency; otherwise he must give us leave to conclude, that whatever is truly decent, is comprehended in this Precept; and the more decent any thing is, the more agreeable is it to the Apostles design.

But besides this, Mr. *Jeanes*, and our Reconciler after him, are grievously out in their Logick. For Decency and Indecency, Reverence and Irreverence, are not privative opposites: for Indecency is not the meer privation of Decency, but they are opposed as Vertue and

and Vice; that is, as two extreams are opposed to each other, which are properly called *adversa*, which are affirmative, not negative opposites, though the Grammatical Notation of the words *Indecency* and *Irreverence*, seems to have betrayed him into that mistake, And I suppose they will allow that there is a medium between two extreams: and let our Reconciler consider how it would sound to say, *That man is virtuous enough, who is not vicious.* *Indecent* and *not decent*, do not signify the same thing, no more than *unlearned* and *not learned*. I have been taught in Logick, that *homo est indoctus*, and *homo est non doctus*, are not equipollent Propositions: To say, *A man is learned*, *a man is not learned*, *a man is unlearned*, signify very differently; and so do these Propositions, *An action is decent*, *an action is not decent*, *an action is indecent*: the first signifies a positive Decency; the second, that there is no positive Decency; the third, that there is a plain opposition and contrariety to the Laws of Decency. Civility and Rudeness in common conversation, are opposed as Decency and Indecency are; but there is an untutored and undisciplined humour, which is neither civil nor rude. This, I think, is sufficient to prove, that there may be no Decency nor Reverence in such actions which cannot be strictly charged with Indecency and Irreverence: and therefore when the Apostle commands, *that all things be done decently*, he requires something more than not to be guilty of any Indecency or Irreverence in Worship.

III. To proceed : He observes, that the same Reverend Bishop proves, That beyond commanding that which hath a necessary relation to the express command of God, or is so requisite for the doing of it, that it cannot be well done without it by any other instrument, or by it self alone, the Bishops can give no Laws which properly and immediately bind the transgressors under sin. I confess I do not certainly understand what this learned man refers to, he having given us no particular instances ; which has given advantage to our Reconciler to apply it as he pleases. But let us consider his Reasons ; and by that we may guess how far we are concerned.

1. Because we never find the Apostles using their Coercion upon any man, but the express breakers of a divine Commandment, or the publick disturbers of the peace of the Church, and the establish'd necessary Order. Thus far the Bishop. To which the Reconciler adds, Men must not therefore first make unnecessary Orders, and when men cannot conscientiously submit unto them, and therefore do not so, cry out that they disturb the Churches peace. These words he represents as the Bishops also, though they are his own ; which is one of his pious frauds. But as for the Argument, I think it is evident, it does not relate to our Dispute, who pretend no other authority but to censure those who disturb the peace of the Church, and the establish'd necessary Order : for such the Rules of Order and Decency are. But how the Apostles censured such persons, we cannot tell neither : for we never

never read that any Christians in those days disputed the Apostolical authority in such matters; or refused to obey their Canons and Injunctions; and therefore there was no occasion to exercise such censures.

2. Because even in those things which were so convenient, that they had power to use Injunctions, yet the Apostles were very backward to use their authority of commanding, much less would they use severity, but entreaty. It was St. Paul's case to Philemon before-mentioned, Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin that which is convenient, yet for loves sake I rather entreat thee. But this does not concern us neither: for what is this to the Rules and Orders of Worship, that he would not take Philemon's servant Oneness from him, without his consent? for I doubt Church-authority does not extend to such matters, which are purely civil and secular: and though when such things are highly expedient for the Worship of God, the Bishop has authority to exhort and persuade, and that man sins who disobeys, yet this is not properly the object of Church-censures, and Ecclesiastical authority, no more than when men refuse to do some pious or charitable act at the Bishops request. Philemon's obligations to St. Paul, who was his spiritual Father, who had converted him to the Christian Faith, gave him a peculiar authority over him; but the bare Apostolical authority did not extend to the disposal of mens Fortunes and Servants, which in those days were part of their Estates.

3. In those things where God had interposed no command, though the Rule they gave contained in it that which was fit and decent, yet if men would resist they gently did admonish & reprove them, & let them alone. So S. Paul, in case of the Corinthian men wearing long hair, If any man list to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor the Churches of God; that is, let him chuse, it is not well done, we leave him to his own liberty, but let him look to it. But this does not reach the case neither: for wearing long hair did not concern the Rites, and Ceremonies, and Uniformity of religious Worship, (which is our onely Dispute) but was an Indecency in common conversation; and a great many such things the Apostles indulged both to Jews and Heathens, till they could be reformed by Reason and better Instructions; though at the same time they did more severely correct the Disorders and Indecencies of Worship. And yet I confess, it seems a very odd Comment upon the Apostles words, *We have no such custom, nor the Churches of God; viz. let him chuse, it is not well done, we leave him to himself.* Whereas in these words the Apostle is so far from leaving them to do as they please, that he determines the Controversie against them by the highest Authority, to a Christian, next to an expresse Law of God, *viz. the Customs and Usages of the Christian Church.* The Apostle indeed does not here threaten Church-censures against them, but first tries what Reason and Argument will do; which is a very proper method for Bishops to use, but

but a very ill Argument to prove that the Church must not censure those who refuse Obedience to her Laws and Constitutions.

4. If the Bishops power were extended farther, it might extend to Tyranny, and there could be no limits beyond this to keep him within the measures and sweetness of the Government Evangelical; but if he pretend to go farther, he may be absolute and supreme in the things of this life, which do not concern the Spirit; and so fall into Dynasty, as one anciently complained of the Bishop of Rome, and change the Father into a Prince, and the Church into an Empire. This is a plain Argument, that the Bishop does not speak here of the decent Rites and Circumstances of Worship: for how the Authority of the Church to prescribe the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Religion should degenerate into Tyranny and secular Power, is unintelligible to me. The Usurpations of the Church of Rome, we know, came in at another door; and the Presbyter, who has little regard to the external Order and Decency of Worship, can find other pretences to get some secular power into his hands.

But what limit can be set to Ecclesiastical Authority, if the Church exceed what is barely necessary to prevent confusion in religious Worship? I answer, Decency is the bound of it, and there needs no other. What is decent and orderly in religious Worship, belongs to Church-authority; what is more, is an irregular abuse: and there is no great danger that such a Power as this should make Bishops secular Princes.

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This makes it evident to me, that this learned Prelate intended not one word of all this against the Ceremonies of the Church of England, or the imposition of them: and it is certain he could not, unless we will say, that he contradicts himself; and then his authority is good on neither side. And I shall make this appear once for all, and thereby answer the Citations out of the Writings of this excellent Bishop, to countenance this Reconciling Designe, all together.

I observe then, that the Bishop himself does expressly justify the Ceremonies of the Church of England, as not offending against any of those Rules he had prescribed for Ecclesiastical Laws. When he speaks of Rituals, and significant Ceremonies, and censures such Ceremonies which are merely for signification, which seems to come nearest to our Case, there he designedly not onely vindicates the Practice, but applauds the Wisdom of the Church of England in reference to her Ceremonies. *There is reason to celebrate and honour the Wisdom of the Church of England, which hath in all her Offices retained but one Ritual or Ceremony that is not of divine Ordinance, or Apostolical Practice, and that is, the Cross in Baptism; which though it be a significant Ceremony, and of no other use, (though in this I cannot agree with the Bishop, and have given my reasons for it above) so it is very innocent in it self; and being one and alone, is in no regard troublesome or afflictive to those who understand her power, her liberty, and reason. I say, she hath one onely*

Duct. dubit.
L. 3. c. 4. R. 20.
S. 8.

only Ceremony of her own appointment : for the Ring in Marriage is the Symbol of a civil and religious Contract ; it is a Pledge and Custom of the Nation, not of the Religion. And these other Circumstances of her Worship, are but determinations of time and place, and manner of a Duty ; they serve to other purposes besides signification ; they were not made for that, but for Order and Decency ; for which there is an Apostolical Precept, and a natural reason, and an evident necessity, or a great convenience. Now if, besides these uses, they can be construed to any good signification or instruction, that is so far from being a prejudice to them, that it is their advantage ; their principal end being different, and warranted, and not destroyed by their superinduc'd and accidental use. In other things we are to remember that Figures and Shadows were for the Old Testament, but Light and Manifestation is in the New.

This is the judgment of this excellent Bishop about the Ceremonies of the Church of England ; which I think makes little for our Reconcilers purpose ; and therefore when he had transcribed that large Discourse about Prot. Reconc. Rituals and Ceremonies merely for signification, out of the Bishops Writings, he stops when he comes to this, as being convinc'd in his Conscience, that the Bishop did not intend one word of this against the Ceremonies of the Church of England, which he expressly excepted and justified. Well, but though the Bishop, out of civility to the Church, made such an exception, yet there was no reason for

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for it ; his Arguments were as strong against the significant Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, as of any other Church. But it seems the Bishop did not think so ; and when the Reconciler alledges the Bishops Authority, as well as Arguments against us, he ought to have urged his Arguments no farther than he himself did, or to have told his Readers what exceptions the Bishop made, and left it to him to judge whether the exception was good and reasonable, or not. And I am apt to think, that every ordinary Reader would have made some little difference, as the Bishop did, between such significant Ceremonies as are with-all the necessary circumstances of religious actions, and receive their Decency from their signification ; and such Ceremonies as contribute nothing to the decent performance of religious actions, but onely entertain a childish fancy with some Theatrical Shews, and arbitrary Images and Figures of things, of which the Bishop there speaks.

And indeed, all his other Citations out of the Writings of this excellent Bishop are as little to his purpose, because none of them concern the decent circumstances of religious Worship, which is our present Dispute ; and therefore we cannot from thence learn what the Bishop's judgment was in these matters : as to take a brief survey of these Arguments, as he calls them, taken out of Bishop *Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium*.

His first Argument is patcht up of two Sayings, at the distance of fifteen pages from each

each other ; and yet they are much nearer to each other in the book, than they are in their designe and signification : He says, *The Bishop truly saith, That 'tis not reasonable to think that God would give the Church-Rulers his Authority for trifling and needless purposes.* This is said in one place ; and to make up his Argument, he tacks another Saying to it: *Now Rituals, saith he, and Externals are nothing of the substance of Religion, but onely appendages, and manner, and circumstances ; a wise man will observe them, not that they are pleasing to God, but because they are commanded by Laws.*

The first of these Sayings is under the third Rule, *That the Church hath power to make Laws in all things of necessary Duty, by a direct Power and divine Authority.* So that this does not relate to the circumstances of religious actions, but to some necessary Duties. The instance the Bishop gives in that place, is this : *That the Bishop hath power to command his Subject or Parishioner to put away his Concubine ; and if he does not, he not onely sins by uncleanness, but by disobedience too.* This sure is remote enough from the Dispute of Ceremonies. But then he proves, that such men sin by disobeying the Bishop in such cases, by this Argument among others, *That it is not reasonable to think that God would give the Church-Rulers his Authority for trifling and needless purposes.* For it is a trifling thing to have Authority to command, if that Authority have no effect ; if men may disobey such commands, without sin. So that these words, whereby the Bishop proves the

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the Authority of the Church to command, and that those sin who disobey, our Reconciler produces to prove that the Church has no Authority to command the decent Ceremonies of Religion, because in his opinion they are trifling and needless things.

The latter part of his Argument is taken from the Bishops sixth Rule, which is this: *Kings and Princes are by the ties of Religion, not of Power, obliged to keep the Laws of the Church.* His resolution of which, in short, is this: That such Ecclesiastical Laws which are the Exercises of internal Religion, cannot be neglected by Princes, without some fraining of their duty to God, which is by the wisdom and choice of men determined in such an instance to such a gratification; but in Externals and Rituals they have a greater liberty; so that every omission is not a sin in them, though it may be in Subjects: and his reason is, *That they are nothing of the substance of Religion, but only appendages, and manner, and circumstances; and therefore a wise man will observe Rituals, because they are commanded by Laws, not that they are pleasing to God.* Since therefore these are wholly matters of obedience, *Kings are free, save only when they become bound collaterally and accidentally.* So that the Bishop does not here speak one word of Externals and Rituals, as such trifling and needless things, that the Church has no Authority to command them (to which purpose our Reconciler applies it) but as such things which being bound on us only by humane Authority, a Sovereign Prince who owns no higher

higher humane Authority than his own, is not so strictly obliged by them, as his Subjects are, but may dispense with himself when he sees fit. These are excellent premises for such a conclusion as our Reconciler draws from them.

But yet it is worth the while to consider what the Bishop means by the External or Rituals of Religion. Whatever our Reconciler finds said about Ecclesiastical Laws, or the External and Rituals of Religion, he presently applies to the Ceremonies of the Church of England, which (excepting the Cross) are only decent circumstances, without which, or such-like, the Worship of God cannot be decently or reverently performed; that is, without which there can be no external Worship, which consists in the external expressions of Honour and Devotion. It is sufficiently evident what a vast difference the Bishop makes between these two. Thus he expressly does in these words: *To the ceremonial Law of the Jews nothing was to be added, and from it nothing was to be substrated; and in Christianity we have left reason to adde any thing of Ceremony, excepting (N. B.) the circumstances and advantages of the very Ministry, as time, and place, and vessels, and ornaments, and necessary appendages. But when we speak of Rituals and Ceremonies, that is, exterior actions or things besides the institution and command of Christ, &c.* Where he expressly distinguishes between the circumstances and advantages of the very Ministry (what is necessary or convenient

Duct. Dubit.
3 b. 4 c. R. 20.
S. 6.

for the decent and orderly performance of the publick acts of Worship) from *Rituals or Ceremonies*, whereby he understands *exterior actions or things*; that is, such Ceremonies as are not the circumstances of religious actions, but are distinct acts themselves, either instituted as *parts of Worship*, and then, he says, *they are intolerable*; or meetly for signification, and that is a very little thing, and of very inconsiderable use in the fulness and charity of the Revelations Evangelical. Such he reckons, giving Milk and Honey, or a little Wine, to persons to be baptized; and to present Milk, together with Bread and Wine, at the Lords Table, to signify nutrition by the Body and Bloud of Christ; to let a Pidgeon flye, to signify the coming of the Holy Spirit; to light up Candles, to represent the Epiphany; to dress a Bed, to express the secret and ineffable Generation of the Saviour of the World; to prepare the figure of the Cross, and to bury an Image, to describe the great Sacrifice of the Cross. A great many such things our Reconciler himself has collected in his eighth Chapter, which may properly be called the Rituals or Ceremonies of Religion; most of which are now out of use in most Churches which formerly used them, and none of them are in use among us. But what we call the Ceremonies of the Church of England, are not in this sense Rituals or Ceremonies, but the decent circumstances of Worship, as the Bishop acknowledges, excepting the Cross in Baptism; which yet is not a meer significant, but a professing Signe, as I have already discours'd :
and

and for such Ceremonies as these, which serve for Order and Decency, the Bishop tells us, *There is an Apostolical Precept, and a natural Reason, and an evident Necessity, or a great Convenience.*

In a word, when the Bishop speaks of Rituals and Ceremonies, he understands by them *exterior actions or things*, something which is like the ceremonial observances of the Jewish Law, which were not meer circumstances of action, but religious Rites. Such were their Sacrifices, Washings, and Purifications, their Phylacteries, their Fasts, and Festivals, new Moons and Sabbaths; not considered merely as circumstances of time, but as having such a Sacredness and Religion stamped on them, that the very observing them was an act of Religion; that the religious Duties observed on them, were appointed for the sake of the day, not the day merely for the sake of the Religion. Such were the numerous Traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees about making broad their Phylacteries, washing their Cups and Platters, and their hands before dinner; and an infinite number of other superstitious observances. Now though some external actions and things, wisely chosen, and prudently used, may be for the service of Religion, at least are not unlawful to be used, unless we will condemn the whole Christian Church for several Ages, which used a great many external Rites; yet every one sees what a vast difference there is between such Rites as these, and the decent Circumstances of religious

Worship. And therefore those men mistake the case of the Church of England, who lay the Controversie upon Rituals and Ceremonies: for there is no such thing in the Church of England, according to the true and proper signification of these words. Our Fasts and Festivals look most like such Rituals and Ceremonies, but are not so: for with us they are not religious days, but days appointed for the solemn Exercises of Religion: which differ as much as a circumstance of time, does from an act of Religion: as making a day religious, which none but God can do, differs from appointing a day for the publick Solemnities of Religion, which the Governours of the Church and State may do: as the Religion of observing a day, differs from those acts of Religion which are performed on such a day.

Now this very observation of the difference between Rituals and Ceremonies, and the decent circumstances of Worship, will answer most of his Citations which he has impertinently alleaged out of the Bishops Writings, and a multitude of Objections, which for want of observing this, have been very injudiciously made against those which we call the Ceremonies of the Church of England.

Recon. p. 214.

Thus he observes from the Bishop, That *Ecclesiastical Laws, which are merely such, cannot be universal and perpetual.* But then he should have told us what the Bishop meant by *Ecclesiastical Laws merely such*: That is, saith he, *those which do not involve a divine Law within their matter.* And therefore this cannot

not relate to the decent circumstances of Worship: for they all involve a divine Law in the matter of them; they are onely the specification of the Law of Decency, and include those very acts of Worship to which they belong. To kneel at the Lords Supper, is a command to receive the Lords Supper kneeling; and when the Minister is enjoyn'd to wear the Surplice, it signifies that he must perform divine Offices in a Surplice. These are but the decent circumstances of necessary Duties, and they founded on the Apostolical Rule of Decency.

Well, but the Bishop adds, *When Christ had made us free from the Law of Ceremonies, which God appointed to the Jewish Nation, and to which all other Nations were bound, if they came into that Communion; it would be intolerable that the Churches who rejoiced in their freedom from that Yoke which God had imposed, should submit themselves to a Yoke of Ordinances which men should make.* For though before they could not, yet now they may exercise Communion, and use the same Religion without communicating in Rites and Ordinances. Now does not this make it plain, that the Bishop does not speak of the decent circumstances of Worship, such as our English Ceremonies are, but of such Rituals and Ceremonies as answer to the Jewish Rites and Ordinances, which he calls exterior things and actions, which are of a different consideration, and must be governed by different Rules and Measures? And yet our Reconciler is so unfortunate, that if the Bishop had

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meant this of the Ceremonies of our Church; it had been nothing to his purpose: for he adds in the very next words, *This does no way concern the Subjects of any Government, (what Liberty they are to retain and use, I shall discourse in the following numbers) but it concerns distinct Churches under distinct Governments;* and it means, as it appears plainly by the Context, and the whole Analogie of the thing, that the Christian Churches must suffer no man to put a Law upon them, who is not their Governour. For when he says, that Ecclesiastical Laws that are merely such, must not be universal, he means, that they must not be intended to oblige all Christendom, except they will be obliged, that is, do consent: That no Church or company of Christians have such authority as to oblige the whole Christian World, and all the Churches in it, to conform to their Rituals and Ceremonies, which he says is contrary to Christian liberty, and such an Usurpation as must not be endured; which is directly levelled against the Usurpations of the Church of Rome. But though one Church cannot impose upon another, yet every Church has power over her own Members; and they are bound to obey that Authority which is over them.

P. 227, &c.

And by the way, this answers all his Testimonies from Bishop Davenant, and Bishop Hall, in their Letters to Durem about his Pacificatory designe of uniting all the Reformed Churches into one Communion; and several others cited in his Preface to the same purpose. They discourse upon what terms distinct Churches,



Churches, which have no authority over each other, ought to maintain Christian Communion; and this he applies to particular Churches, with reference to their own Members: as if because particular Churches must not usurp authority and dominion over each other, nor deny Communion upon every difference of Opinion, or different Customs and Usages or Modes of Worship; therefore no Church must govern her own Communion, nor give Laws to her own Members: as if because the King of England must not impose the Laws of England on Italy or Spain, therefore he must not make Laws for England neither.

This our Reconciler was aware of; and therefore in his Preface, to strengthen these Authorities, he asks this Question: *Why that agreement in Fundamentals which is sufficient to preserve Communion betwixt Churches disagreeing in Rites and Ceremonies, and Doctrines of inferior moment, may not be sufficient also to preserve Communion among those Members of the same Church, though disagreeing in like matters? For if the reason why Christian Churches which do thus differ, should be received and owned as Christians, and Brethren of the same Communion with us, is because these differences do not hinder their being real Members of Christs Body, and therefore Fellow-members of the same Church and Body with us, since the same reason proves the Members of any Church whatsoever, who differ only in non-fundamentals, capable of being real Christians, and so of the same Church and Body with us; why should it not oblige us to receive*

Preface, p. 53.

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them as Christian Brethren, i. e. persons of the same Communion with us, if we can do it without sin? Now the Answer to this is so obvious, that I wonder our Reconciler should miss it. For,

1. The reason of Communion between distinct Churches can be nothing else but the common Principles of Christianity, *one Lord, one Faith, one Hope, one Baptism, &c.* that is, whatever is essential to Christian Faith and Worship: for what is more than this, as the particular Rules and Orders of Discipline and Government, and Modes of Worship, are the Object of Ecclesiastical Authority; and since no Church has authority over another, they ought not to impose their own Rules of Discipline or Worship upon each other. But now no private Christian can live in the Communion of any particular Church, without submitting to its Government and Discipline, and conforming to its Rules of Worship. Though one Church must not usurp Authority over another, yet every Church must govern her own Members, and direct her own Worship; and there can be no Order nor Decency of Worship, where there are no Rules of Worship, no Uniformity, but every man is left to do as he pleases. And yet,

2. Though the Communion of distinct Churches with each other, does not require that they should all observe the same Usages and Rites of Worship in their own Churches, yet it requires that the Members of these distinct Churches should communicate with each other,

other, and conform to each others Customs, where they happen to be present. It is a ridiculous thing to talk of two Churches being in Communion with each other, who will not, as occasion serves, communicate together upon the terms of each others Communion. For Calvinists to call the Lutherans, or Lutherans the Calvinists, Brethren; but to refuse to joyn in Communion, when they happen to be in each others Churches, this is not to live in Communion with each other: or for a Calvinist to communicate in the Lutheran Church, or a Lutheran in the Calvinist, but according to the Rites of their own Churches, not of the Church in which they communicate; this is not to communicate with, but publickly to affront each other. The onely Principle of Catholick Communion between distinct Churches in such matters as these, is so far to allow of each others Rules and Modes of Worship, as to conform, when occasion serves, to such indifferent Customs and Usages, though very different from their own, rather than divide the Communion of the Church: and if this be necessary to the Communion of distinct Churches with each other, then certainly it is necessary for the Members of every particular Church to submit to its Authority, and conform to its Rules and Orders of Worship. For,

3. It is ridiculous to imagine that nothing more is necessary to a Christian in Church-Communion, than what is absolutely necessary to the State of a Christian out of the visible

Communion of any Church; as if nothing more were necessary to make a man a Member of the Commonwealth, than what is necessary to make him a man. The belief of the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity, and Obedience to those Laws of Righteousness, which have an eternal and immutable goodness in them, will make a man a good Christian in a private and single capacity; but obedience to Government, and conformity to the Rules of Discipline and Worship, are as necessary to make a man a good Christian in Church-society, as they are essential to the being and constitution of a Church; and it is impossible to form a Church-Society onely of the Essentials of Christianity, considered as a Systeme of Doctrines and Laws, which every private Christian ought to observe: for there are the Essentials of Christian-Communion, as well as of Christian Religion. Christ did not onely publish the Gospel, but instituted a Church; and the Government and Discipline of the Church is of a distinct consideration from the belief of the Gospel. No man can be a Member of the Church, without believing the Gospel; but Church-Society lays some new obligations upon us, beyond what is necessary in a single state out of Church-Society.

But to return. Though this learned Bishop did not urge the abrogation of the Mosaical Law against the imposition of the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, nor against any other Rituals or Ceremonies neither, but onely

only against such usurpt Authority as challenge a power to make Laws for the whole Christian World ; yet this Argument is frequently alleadged by others, and more than once repeated by our Reconciler to this purpose : but how trifling it is, appears from this distinction between Rituals and Ceremonies, and the decent Circumstances of Worship.

They tell us, that Christ removed those burdens which were on the Church, and therefore would not impose new ones. But does the Church of *England* lay any new burdens upon men ? Does she require any thing more than what is necessary ? Christ requires that we should celebrate his last Supper in remembrance of him ; that the Minister should perform all the publick Offices of Religion, and that this should be done in a decent and reverent manner ; and does the Church of *England* require any more ? Does she institute any Ceremonies (excepting the Cross in Baptism, which is a professing Signe, and relates to no act of Worship, though it be thought decent to be done at the time of Baptism) but what are decent circumstances of action ? And is Decency then a new burden, which Christ hath not imposed on his Disciples ? Is Decency an unnecessary or unreasonable thing ? Did Christ leave it at liberty then, whether his Disciples should worship God decently or not ?

Christ hath taken away the Yoke of Jewish Ceremonies, and has the Church of *England* put another Jewish Yoke on the Disciples

ples necks? Are there any such Rituals and Ceremonies in the Church of England, as have the least affinity with the Jewish Yoke? Did Christ, when he abrogated the Jewish Law, abrogate all Decency of Worship too? or is the bare Decency of Worship a Jewish Yoke? What correspondence is there between the Ceremonies of the Jewish Law, and the decent circumstances of Worship? between new and distinct acts, and the decent Modes of actions?

P. 215.

But our Reconciler proceeds. *Ecclesiastical Laws must not be perpetual; that is, when they are made, they are relative to time and place, to persons and occasions, subject to all changes, &c.* Now besides that the Bishop stills speaks of such Laws as concern Rituals and external Observances, not the decent circumstances of Worship; and therefore it is impertinently alleged in our present Controversie: yet suppose it did relate to our Ceremonies, what advantage could he make of it? They must not be perpetual, that is, they are alterable, when the wisdom of Governours sees fit; and who denies it? But must every one who believes these Ceremonies alterable, presently grant that they must be altered right or wrong?

This is much like another mangled Testimony, which he cites from Rule 12. n. 9. I shall transcribe the whole, because our Reconciler has concealed the sense, by transcribing onely part of it. *Excepting those things which the Apostles received from Christ, in which they were Ministers to all Ages, once for all conveying*
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the mind of Christ to Generations to come, in all other things they were but ordinary Ministers to govern the Churches in their own times, and left all that ordinary power to their Successors, with a power to rule their Churches, such as they had; and therefore whatever they conveyed it from Christ, a part of his Doctrine, or any thing of his appointment, this was to bind for ever. All this our Reconciler leaves out; which is a Key to what follows. For Christ is our onely Lawgiver, and what he said was to bind for ever: In all things which he said not, the Apostles could not be Lawgivers, they had no such authority; and therefore whatsoever they ordered by their own wisdom, was to abide as long as the reason did abide; but still with the same liberty with which they appointed it: for of all men in the world, they would least put a Snare upon the Disciples, or tye Fetters upon Christian liberty.

To what purpose he cites this, he does not say; but I suppose it was to insinuate that there is no Authority in the Church to make any Laws which Christ has not made, because he is our onely Lawgiver; and that to make such Laws, is to put a Snare upon the Disciples, and to tye Fetters upon Christian Liberty, which the Apostles of all men would not do: but this is directly contrary to the designe of the Bishop. All that he says, is no more, than this: That the Apostles had not authority to make such Laws as should perpetually oblige the Church in all Ages: for Christ onely is so our Lawgiver, that his Laws are perpetual and unalterable; and therefore what

what they taught as from Christ, that was to bind for ever; but what Laws they made as ordinary Ministers to govern the Churches in their own times, they might be altered, when the reason of them ceas'd, by the Bishops and Ministers of following Ages, who have as much ordinary authority for the government of the Church, as the Apostles themselves had. So that the Governours of the Church have authority to make Laws, though not unalterable ones; and therefore it is not making Laws, but making perpetual Laws, which he calls putting a Snare upon the Disciples, and tying Fetters on Christian Liberty: for the more unalterable Laws there are, the less Liberty the Church enjoys; and those Laws which were of excellent use when they were first made, yet when their reason and use ceases, might prove Snares to Christians, if there were no power in the Church to repeal them.

All his Citations from this excellent Bishop about Ecclesiastical Laws, are of the same nature; they do not concern the decent circumstances of Worship, but Rituals and external Ministeries of Religion: and I suppose I need not tell any man how impertinent his Testimonies about Fasts, and Evangelical Councils, and Subscriptions to Articles, &c. are to this Controversie. This is sufficient to prove, that this excellent Bishop is ours; and to satisfy all men, that this *Protestant Reconciler* is either a very ignorant and careless Reader of Books, or a shameless Impostor, in suborning

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mens words to give testimony against their own protest and avowed Principles and Doctrines.

There are several other little Arguments which are frequently repeated by our Reconciler, and confirmed with great Names and great Authorities, though it is probable enough that he has as much abused other great men, as he has done the Bishop; and I have not leisure nor opportunity to examine all; and it is no great matter, when the Argument is weak and trifling, whose Argument it is.

They tell us, that to impose such Ceremonies and Rites of Worship, is to come after Christ, and to mend and correct his Laws, and to require new terms of Communion which Christ hath not required. This is a great fault, if the charge be good and just: but is the Church of *England* guilty of any such thing? Does she require any new acts of Worship, which Christ has not required? Has not Christ required that we should worship God decently? Has he not made Obedience to our Rulers and Governours a necessary condition of Communion? And does the Church of *England* require any more? Has the Church of *England* imposed any thing upon her People, but the Rules of Order and Decency? and has not Christ enjoyed this? Are the Ceremonies of our Church decent circumstances of Worship, or are they not? If they be, then here are no new terms of Communion, here is no mending nor correcting the Laws of Christ, but only a determination of some
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necessary circumstances which Christ left undetermined, and gave authority to his Church to determine.

But why should Church-Communion be suspended upon such terms as are not necessary to Salvation? Why is not that sufficient to make a man a Member of a Church, which is sufficient to carry him to Heaven? No doubt but it is; and the Church of England requires no more. The Decency of Worship is as necessary to eternal Salvation, as publick Worship is; which is not Worship, if it be not decent. Decency is necessary; and though such or such particular Modes of Decency be not necessary, yet some decent Mode of Worship is; and therefore that Church which requires no more than the Decency of Worship, requires nothing but what is necessary to Salvation.

That which confounds and blunders these men, and makes them dream of new terms of Communion, is this: That they distinguish the act of Worship from the manner of performing it; and because Christ hath chiefly instituted and commanded the act, but the Church directs and prescribes the manner, therefore they say the Church mends Christs Law, and makes new terms of Communion, by requiring something more than Christ has instituted and commanded. As for instance, Christ has instituted his Mystical Supper, and commanded us to eat Bread and drink Wine in remembrance of his Body, which was broken, and of his Blood, which was shed for us; but

but has not commanded us to do this either sitting, standing, or kneeling; though it is absolutely necessary that we should do it in one posture or other. Now the Church of England commands us to receive kneeling, and will admit none to the Lords Table who will not receive kneeling. This, say they, is to mend the Laws of Christ, and to make new terms of Communion. Why so? Does the Church require any more than Christ has required? Yes, say they, she requires kneeling, which Christ does not require. But how does that appear, that Christ does not require it? Because, say they, he has not commanded us to receive kneeling. No, say I, that is no Argument at all that Christ does not require it: for he who commands us to receive, commands us to receive in some posture or other: for though we may logically distinguish between the act of receiving and the posture wherein we receive, yet these cannot be actually separate; for no man can receive, but he must receive in some posture; and therefore he who commands doing such an act, includes whatever is necessary to the doing of it right. You will say, But yet Christ has not determined what posture we shall receive in, but left them all indifferent. Suppose this to be true, yet the posture must of necessity be determined before we can receive: for no man can receive but in some particular posture; and therefore either every man must determine himself, or the Authority of the Church must determine us: which seems to be much more reasonable,

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both because it is most decent and orderly that there should be some uniform posture of receiving; and because the Governours of the Church, not private Christians, have the sole authority in such cases, committed to them by Christ himself. But now the question is, whether to determine what Christ, has not determined, and yet what must be determined before we can perform that Duty which Christ commands, be to come after Christ to correct his Laws, and to make new terms of Communion? If it be, then whoever receives the Lords Supper, whatever posture he receives in, must of necessity correct the Laws of Christ, and make new terms of Communion, at least for himself, because he must receive in some particular and determined posture; whereas Christ has left all postures indifferent and undetermined: which shews what a senseless and ridiculous imputation this is.

No, you will say, to receive in some particular posture, though it be not determined by Christ, is no correcting his Laws, nor making new terms of Communion, because Christ has left all postures indifferent and undetermined; and therefore has left it to our liberty to use which we please; and when we do so, we only use that liberty which Christ has given us. But so to determine any one posture of receiving, as not to allow of any other, nor to admit any to our Communion who will not use that posture, this is to make new terms of Communion which Christ has not made: for it he have left all postures undetermined, then

then to be sure he has not said, that no man shall be admitted to the Sacrament, who will not kneel. And though every man may determine for himself, or the Church may determine for us all, yet it must not be determined so, as to destroy the indifferency of the posture; which is directly contrary to Christ's Institution, who has left all postures indifferent.

This Objection, at a distance, I confess, seems very plausible, and to bear hard upon the Church: but when we look more narrowly into it, it vanishes into nothing. For,

1. I readily grant, should the Church of *England* determine against the lawfulness of any other posture but kneeling in receiving the Lords Supper, she might be charged with correcting the Laws of Christ, and altering the nature of things: for this would be to make some things necessary, and other things unlawful, which Christ had left indifferent.

2. Should she refuse to communicate with any other Church which does not kneel at the Sacrament, merely because she does not kneel, she might be charged with making new terms of Communion which Christ has not made: for she has no authority to prescribe to other Churches in matters of an indifferent and undetermined nature; and therefore cannot pretend her authority for such an Imposition, but must pretend the nature of the thing, that kneeling at the Sacrament is a necessary term of Communion; which being no term of Christ's making, must be a term of her own making,

making; and then she would be guilty of making new terms of Communion; and if a Schism followed upon it, she would be the Schismatick.

See the Vind.
of the Defen.
of Dr. Stilling.
p. 427, &c.

3. But yet for the Church to determine, for the regulating her own Communion, what Christ has not determined, but yet what must be determined, before that Duty can be performed which Christ has commanded, is not to make new terms of Communion, though she refuse to admit any to her Communion, who will not use the prescribed posture of receiving; and my reason for it is this: because she neither prescribes kneeling as necessary in it self, but onely as a decent posture of receiving; nor prescribes it to any but those of her own Communion, whom she has authority to govern. In such cases the Church does not make new terms of Communion, but exercises a just authority in determining what was left undetermined, and in prescribing Rules for the Decency of her own Worship.

But you will say, Does not the Church of *England* make that a term and condition of her Communion, without which she will not admit any man to communicate with her? I answer, No, this does not always follow; every such thing is a Rule of her Government, but not a term of her Communion; which are of a very distinct consideration in the constitution of every Church. The Laws of *Catholick* Communion require, that she make nothing a term of her Communion, but what is necessary for the whole *Catholick* Church; and

and she can never be charged with making kneeling a term of her Communion, while she holds Communion with such Churches who do not kneel at receiving, or at least refuses the Communion of no Church upon that account; but now the Rules of Government in every Church are very distinct from the terms of her Communion. Every Church has authority to make Laws for her self, to prescribe the Forms and Rules of Worship and Discipline; and though she have not authority to deny Communion to other Churches who will not submit to her private Laws and Rules, yet she has authority to deny Communion to her own Members who refuse to obey her Laws; or else she has no authority to make Laws, if she have no authority to punish the breach of them. So that here are two distinct reasons for which a Church may deny her Communion to any persons; either because they renounce the terms of her Communion; or because they refuse to submit to her Laws and Rules of Worship; and therefore it is a ridiculous thing to say that a Church makes every thing a term of her Communion, for the refusal of which she denies her Communion to her own Members. We may call these, if we please, the terms of her particular Communion; but this is no greater fault for any Church to make such terms of Communion, than to make Laws for Government and Discipline; for such terms are nothing else.

To return then to our Argument. Since

the act of Worship, and the necessary circumstances of Action, though they may be distinctly considered, yet cannot be separated; that Church which commands nothing but a decent performance of those acts of Worship which Christ himself has commanded us to perform, cannot be charged with making any additions to the Laws of Christ, or with commanding any new thing. For the decent manner of doing a thing, is included in the command of doing it, unless we think our Saviour was indifferent whether we worship God decently or indecently: and therefore if the Church onely enjoyn such habits and postures, times and places, as are necessary to the doing of the action, and are decent circumstances of doing it, the commands nothing but what Christ has virtually commanded. And this is a plain Answer to that other Objection, that the Apostles had authority to teach onely such things as Christ had commanded them; which if it be opposed to their Authority of Governing the Church, which required the exercise of their own Wisdom and Prudence, and making occasional Laws in emergent cases, is a very trifling Objection: but however, the Church of *England* teaches nothing but what Christ taught. She teaches all the acts of Worship which Christ commanded, and no other; and she teaches the decent manner of doing this, which is involved in the very command of doing it: for though the particular decent Rites of Worship are not expressed, yet all decent Rites

Rites are included in the command of doing it ; and therefore the Church may take her choice.

Well, but the Apostles gave Laws onely about necessary things, as we see in the Council of *Jerusalem*, they would lay no other burden upon the Disciples, but what they thought necessary, at least for that time, 15 *Acts* 29. Now though there might several Answers be given to this, I shall say no more at present, but that I take the Decency of Worship to be necessary ; I am sure *St. Paul* gives an express Law about it. But as for the necessary things which were determined at the Council in *Jerusalem*, they did not concern the circumstances of Worship, but some external Rituals and Ceremonies, which were matters of burden. We have nothing like it in our Church ; and if ever the Church should undertake to determine such matters, it will be seasonable to urge the practice of the Council at *Jerusalem*, to determine onely necessary things.

These are the most material things our Reconciler has urged against the imposition of the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*. Whether upon the whole it appears that they are so useless and unnecessary, that the Church ought not to interpose her Authority in such matters, or be justly blameable for doing it, I must leave every man to judge.

CHAP. II.

*Concerning charity to the Souls of men ;
and how far, and in what cases it obli-
ges Church-Governours ; and what re-
gard Church-Governours ought to have
to the Errours, and Mistakes, and
Scruples of PRIVATE CHRI-
STIANS under their care.*

HAVING discours'd thus largely of the use-
fulness and necessity of the decent Cere-
monies and Circumstances of religious Wor-
ship, in opposition to our Reconciler, who af-
firms them to be useless and unnecessary, and
to have no positive Order or Decency, for
which they should be commanded ; it is time
now to consider the other part of his Argu-
ment, *viz.* that charity to the Souls of men
obliges Church-Governours not to impose a-
ny such unnecessary things, or to alter and re-
move them, if already imposed, when through
the mistake and scruples of some Christians a-
bout such matters, they occasion their sin and
fall, and hazard their eternal Salvation : that
is, when such Impositions as these, which some
men believe unlawful, and others doubt whe-
ther they be lawful or not, tempt men to for-
sake the Communion of the Church, and list
themselves in a Schism, which is a damning
sin.

fin. I need not point out to any particular place wherein this is said; for it is to be found almost in every page of his Book, and comes in at the tail of every Argument: and therefore I shall once for all consider these Principles also, and begin here with charity to the Souls of men, which in the method of my Discourse is the second general Principle I promised to examine. The Question then is this:

Secondly, What obligation charity to the Souls of men lays upon the Governours of the Church. That the Governours of the Church ought to exercise great tenderness and charity to the Souls of men, I readily grant; for the care of Souls is their proper work and business: and our Reconciler could not have pitch'd upon a more popular Argument to declaim upon, as he does at large, *p.* 187, &c. And indeed, I find his Talent lies more in some insinuating Harangues, than in close reasoning: but though he has made a fine Story of this, and said things artificially enough to move the Passions of his Readers, he has never offered fairly to state the extent and measures of Charity with relation to acts of Government, but onely asserted charity to the Souls of men to be the Duty of Governours, as well as of private Christians (which nobody denies that I know of); and from thence infers the alteration of our Ceremonies, and that Church-Governours act uncharitably, if they do not consent to such an alteration. Now the alteration of publick Laws and Ru tes

A Vindication of the Rights

of Worship, which some men take an unjust and unreasonable offence at, whatever mischief they do to their own Souls by such an unjust offence, does not seem to me to be an immediate consequence from the obligations of charity to mens Souls : and therefore there should have been something at least offered for the proof of it ; and, I confess, I cannot see any thing that looks like an Argument to this purpose. Since therefore I have little or nothing to answer upon this Argument, which our Reconciler thought better to take for granted, than to prove it, I shall endeavour to state this matter so plainly, as to vindicate our Governours from this spiteful and uncharitable Accusation, of want of charity to mens Souls. And to this end, I shall briefly inquire wherein the Charity of Governours must consist, and how it must express it self ; which I shall explain by these two Principles.

I. That the Charity of Governours is consistent with the Duty and Authority of Government.

II. That the Charity of Governours must express it self in the Acts of Government.

I. That the Charity of Governours must be such as is consistent with the Duty and Authority of Government. For charity to others cannot dispense with our own duty ; and therefore if Christ have given authority to his Ministers to govern his Church, whate-

ver pretences of charity there be to the contrary, they must govern it, or they are very uncharitable to themselves, in neglecting their own Duty, out of pretence of charity to others. Nay, all private acts of charity must give place to publick charity. Now Government is a publick good, that is, is a publick charity ; and therefore must not be neglected out of pretence of charity to private Christians.

Now to apply this to our present purpose : If the Governours of the Church could do what our Reconciler desires, without neglecting their own Duty, or injuring their Authority and Government, I think this Plea of Charity would be more specious and plausible ; but that they cannot do it, is as plain to me as a first Principle. For,

1. It is their duty to direct and govern religious Assemblies, and to secure the Order and Decency of publick Worship ; which they cannot do, without prescribing the Rules, and determining the decent circumstances of action. But you will say, Cannot the Bishops govern the Church, nor take care of the Decency of Worship, unless they command the Minister to officiate in a Surplice, and the People to receive kneeling ? Yes, no doubt they may. Then these Laws are alterable, They are so. Then in charity they are bound to alter them, according to your own Rules : for they may do this, without neglecting their duty of governing religious Assemblies. I deny the consequence, and that for this reason ;
be-

because Charity does not require any man, much less Governours, to do a foolish thing which serves no good end at all. For if they should alter our present Rules and decent Circumstances of Worship, they must prescribe some others, or else they neglect their Duty: for the Decency of publick Worship cannot be preserved, without the decent Circumstances of Worship; and they cannot be secured (especially in such an Age as this, wherein so many men think a rude and slovenly Worship to be most pure and spiritual) without some fixt and standing Rules of Decency. Now whatever change they make, they cannot change for the better, nor remove any scruple by such a change. For most of the Principles upon which our Dissenters dispute against our present Ceremonies, will serve as well against any other establish'd Order of Worship: and certainly it is not worth the while for Governours to alter Laws meetly to try the humours of People, to see whether those who without reason scruple Impositions in one case, will without reason submit to other Impositions, when the same reasons hold in both. It is neither consistent with the prudence nor charity of Government, upon such slight pretences as these, to make alterations so much for the worse, as they must be, if ever they alter our present Rules of Worship. If this should gratifie some humourfome People, it might justly offend and scandalize much better men, to see a decent way of Worship changed for that which is less decent. No, saith

saith our Reconciler, *this cannot with any truth be pretended.---Are not things indifferent, such as may be imposed or not imposed at pleasure? And doth not our Church declare her Ceremonies to be things indifferent? Can therefore any regular Son of the Church of England be offended that she doth use her liberty in matters wholly left unto her liberty, and by her first Reformers declared to be so? Yes, why not, for all this? Must every thing which is alterable, be altered for no reason at all? May it not justly offend a regular Son of the Church of England, to see a more decent way of Worship laid aside, and that which is less decent come in the room of it? The Church of England, I am sure, is not of this mind; she allows that her Ceremonies may be changed and altered, but they ought to be altered onely upon just causes, as she expressly determines: and though in such cases she allows of some alteration in her Ceremonies, yet she judges it necessary, that some Ceremonies should be retained, since without some Ceremonies it is not possible to keep any Order or quiet Discipline in the Church.* But, says our Reconciler, *they do not desire that the Ceremonies by Law establish'd should be abolished, or that Conformists should be forbid to use them; but onely that others whose Consciences will not permit them so to do, should be dispensed with in their omission of them.* This would be a greater and more just offence, than the other: for this must be either in the same, or in distinct Assemblies. If in the same, this introduces nothing but Disorder, Confusion, and Schisms

Recon. p.332,
333.

Of Ceremo-
nies: why
some abolish'd
and some re-
tain'd. Pref. to
the Com. Pray.

into

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into the Bowels of the Church; if in distinct Assemblies, this is to establish Schism by a Law, and to make them onely legal Conventicles. But he says, *As some sit, some stand, some kneel at Common-Prayer, and Prayer before Sermon, and this without confusion; so may some sit, some kneel, some stand at the receiving the Sacrament.* But does our Reconciler think this variety of posture at Prayer, an orderly and decent thing? especially for men to sit at Prayers? Standing may be sometimes necessary, because especially in full Auditories all persons may not have the conveniency of kneeling: But is one Irregularity sufficient to justify another? Does not the Church require an uniform posture at Prayer too? And is it not more decent and orderly, that it should be so? And yet there is a great difference between such various postures at Prayers, and at receiving the Lords Supper. For excepting the rudeness of sitting, when men have strength of body to kneel or stand, which is an offence to pious and devout minds; these variety of postures do not proceed from mens differing judgments and opinions about them; and therefore do not occasion mutual scandal and offence, censuring and judging one another in the very act of Worship. But differing postures in receiving the Lords Supper, is matter of Dispute and scruple; one thinks kneeling idolatrous and superstitious, the other deservedly thinks it rude and unmannerly to sit; and this must of necessity occasion mutual Emulations in the very act of receiving; than which,

no-

nothing can be more inconsistent with the nature of that holy Communion. And if you say, that men must lay aside this judging and censorious humour, you must either mean, that while men retain these differing apprehensions of things, they must not judge one another; which is to say, that they must not judge of men and things as they think; which is ridiculously impossible, unless you can teach men not to think as they think: or that they must alter their apprehensions of things, and look upon all these as indifferent postures; and then there will be no reason to alter the Laws, or to allow of such different postures, when mens scruples are removed.

2. As the Governours of the Church would neglect their Duty, so they would manifestly injure their Authority by such a compliance with the ignorance, humour, and scruples of men: and therefore how charitable soever our Reconciler may think this, it is not such a Charity as becomes Governours. For private Christians to abridge themselves in the use of their Christian liberty for the sake of others, is in many cases highly commendable, and a generous act of charity; but for Governours to renounce their Authority to gratifie Dissenters, is so far from being an act of charity, that it is betraying their Trust. Either Christ has committed this power to them to govern religious Assemblies, and to prescribe the decent Rules of Worship, or he has not: if he have (as our Reconciler has more than once owned in this very Book) then
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P. 338.

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this power is a Trust committed to them, and such a Trust as they must give an account of: and therefore no pretence of charity can justify them in renouncing the exercise of it. The Reconciler indeed tells us, *That which is here pleaded for, is neither a denial, nor a dissimbling of their imposing power in Superiours, but only an abatement of the exercise thereof toward some weak Dissenters. Which may be done with the asserting of the power, and a profession that they do suspend the exercise thereof, not through conviction that it may not be lawfully used, but out of pure commiseration and bowels of compassion towards their weak Brethren.* But all the Protestations in the World will not salve this matter: for the great Dispute about Ceremonies turns upon this hinge, whether the Church have authority to command any thing relating to the Worship of God, which is not expressly instituted and enjoined by Christ. Hence all such Rules of Order and Decency are, by our modest and peaceable Dissenters, opprobriously call'd *Wilt-worship* and *Humane Inventions*, and teaching for *Doctrines the commandments of men*: and though they had nothing to say against the lawfulness of the things themselves, (and indeed, all that they have to say, is next to nothing) yet their not being commanded by God, and their being commanded by men, though by such men as are invested with Christ's authority to govern his Church, is thought a sufficient reason not to submit to them. Now when the Authority of the Church is the principal

cial matter in dispute, and Ceremonies only a collateral dispute, as depending upon an usurped and Illegal Authority, I would fain know of our Reconciler, how upon these terms they can give up these Ceremonies to the clamours of the Dissenters, without giving up their own Authority with them; which is the principal thing in question, and for the sake of which the Ceremonies are disputed.

Now let any man judge whether this be an act of charity, to part with that Authority which Christ has placed in his Church. Is this Authority for the good of the Church, or is it not? If it be not, then it seems Christ has placed such an Authority in his Church, as is not for the publick good; and this charges our Saviour himself with want of prudence or charity to his own Church, in setting such an uncharitable power over it: If Church-Authority be for the publick good, then it is no act of charity to part with it.

As to give but one instance of this, which our Reconciler is often at. He tells us, *That P. 323. the Scripture-Exhortations (to Peace and Unity) are so far from requiring such an Unity and Uniformity, (as we plead for) that they perfectly confute all those who think it fit to lay the Union of the Church upon an uniformity in lesser matters, and do impose them as the Conditions of Communion: for either we must all submit to some infallible Guide and Judge of Controversies, in order to our Union, as R. H. thinks it necessary in order to our compliance with these Precepts, or else confess 'tis morally impossible to comply with them,*

them, is being visibly impossible to bring all men unto an unity of judgment and of practice in these things; and so we must reflect upon the wisdom of our Lord, and of his Precepts. And grant that Protestants have no sufficient means of Unity, which is the very thing that Papists do so continually upbraid us with, or must acknowledge that the way to this desired Unity is not that of imposing and requiring uniformity in little matters, concerning which the minds of men are full of doubts and scruples; but that of mutual condescension, and forbearance, and charity in lesser differences. God help that Church, which meets with such Reconcilers as these! But that which I shall observe here, is his own concession, and his Dilemma upon it. He argues strongly, That while men are left to judge for themselves in the External of Worship, it is impossible to bring them unto an unity of judgment and practice in these things; for this, he says, must be granted, unless we own the necessity of an intallible Judge. Here indeed the Reconciler and I differ a little about the infallibility of this Judge; but we agree upon the main point, that without a Judge to determine these matters, there can be no Unity and Agreement among Christians; which certainly is a demonstration in the Age in which we live, how strange soever it might have been thought in the Primitive times of Unity. And his Dilemma is a very sore one: For either this reflects upon the Wisdom of Christ himself, and grants that Protestants have no sufficient means of Unity; or that the way to this

this desired Unity is not requiring uniformity in little matters. Now to begin with the last first; it is demonstrably true, that there is no Church-Unity without Unity in Worship; wherein the principal exercise of Christian Communion consists; and that there can be no Decency and Order in this (which is an Apostolical Precept) without Uniformity; and no Uniformity without such Impositions. What follows then, but that we must reflect on the wisdom of Christ in not leaving Authority in his Church sufficient to determine such matters, and grant that Protestants have no means of Union? These are hard terms; but I cannot see how they can be avoided, without granting that Christ has given, though not an infallible Judge of all Controversies of Faith, yet a supreme Authority to his Church to determine all matters of Decency and Order; which all Christians are bound to obey in all cases, where their Rules and Orders do not contradict some plain and express Law of Christ. And this Principle will quickly make us all of a mind in such matters.

Now then from hence I thus argue: If the wisdom of Christ himself in instituting a Church-Society, and commanding all Christians to live in Peace, and Unity, and Love; if the Unity of Christians among themselves, and the Decency and Uniformity of Worship, are so nearly concerned in the sacredness of Church-Authority, that without it the wisdom of Christ is obscured and exposed to censure, the Peace and Unity of Christians rendered impracticable, Protestants left destitute of any means of Union,

and occasion given to Papists to cry up the necessity of an infallible Judge, that which draws so many fatal consequents after it; does not seem to me to be any great act of charity: and yet thus it would be, should the Governours of the Church, in compliance with the frowardness and scruples of Schismatics, give up their authority in the Externals of Worship, and leave every man to do as he pleased. While the Church maintains her Authority, a little Discipline and Government, and a few good Arguments, may in time cure the Schism; and if it will not, let Schismatics answer for it at the last day: but if Schismatics once gain this point, and wheedle the Church for peace sake out of her Authority, then we must bid an eternal farewell to Peace, and Order, and Uniformity in Religion: for men will never agree in these matters, without the determination of Authority. There is no other means left in the Church to decide these differences, when the Church has parted with her Authority; and thus the Wisdom of Christ will be reproached and censured, and the Protestant Name and Religion exposed to contempt: and this is our Reconciler's Protestant Charity.

Well, but suppose this compliance with Dissenters did not infer a renuntiation of their Power and Authority, but only a suspension of the exercise of it, the case is much the same: for this forbearance must be for ever, unless we could suppose that these men will return to the obedience of the Church, when the

the Church leaves off to command. Now it is the same thing for the Church to renounce her Power, and to renounce the exercise of it. I suppose Christ gave this Power to the Church, that she should exercise it; and if the Power be necessary to the welfare and unity, and edification of the Church, to be sure the exercise of it is: For Authority is a meet empty name, and good for nothing, when it doth nothing. This, I think, is sufficient to prove that the charity of Governours does not require them to renounce their Government, neither in the authority nor exercise of it: And therefore,

II. The Charity of Governours must consist in the acts and exercise of Government; that is, as far as it concerns our present Dispute, in making and repealing Laws. And I dare joyn issue here with our Reconciler, and challenge him and all his dissenting Clients, to fix the least imputation of uncharitableness upon the Church of *England* on this account: as to discourse this matter a little more particularly, to confound all such unjust Defamers of Authority and Government.

I. I shall begin with repealing Laws, and altering such Rituals and Ceremonies as were either sinful, superstitious, or inconvenient; because here our Reformation began. And what Rules our Church observed in this, we learn from the Preface to the Common-Prayer; where the reasons are assigned why some Ceremonies were abolish'd: As, 1. Because some of them which were at first well inten-

ded, did in time degenerate into vanity and superstition. 2. Others were from the beginning the effects of an indiscreet Devotion, and such a Zeal as was without knowledge, and dayly grew to more and more abuses; and they were rejected, because they were unprofitable, blinded the people, hindred them from a right understanding of the true nature of Christian Religion, and obscured the glory of God. 3. Some were put away, because their very numbers were an intolerable burden, and made the estate of Christian people in worse case concerning this matter, than were the Jews, as *St. Austin* complained in his days, when the number of Ceremonies was much less than it was in this Church at the time of Reformation; which was a great injury to the Gospel of Christ, which is not a Ceremonial Law (as much of *Moses* Law was) but a Religion to serve God, not in the bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit. And lastly, the most weighty cause of the abolishment of certain Ceremonies was, that they were so far abused, partly by the superstitious blindness of the ignorant and unlearned, and partly by the unsatiable avarice of such as sought more their own lucre than the glory of God, that the abuses could not well be taken away, the thing remaining still.

With what grave and mature consideration our Church proceeded in this affair, is evident from this account, which contains all the wise reasons that can be thought of for the alteration

tion of any publick Constitutions. Here is charity to the Souls of men, in delivering them from ignorance and superstition, to which they were betrayed by the Rituals and Ceremonies of Religion; a tender regard to the ease and liberty of Christians, which was oppressed by such a multitude as were hard to know and to remember, and very troublesome to observe, and almost impossible to understand; which made them wholly useless and unprofitable. Here is a great regard to the glory of God, which was obscured by these Ceremonies; to the purity of the Christian Religion, which was transformed, by a multitude of Ceremonies, into a meer external and figurative Worship. And here are the true reasons why any Ceremonies which have been long used in a Church, and confirmed by Ecclesiastical Canons, or Civil Laws, ought, notwithstanding that, to be removed, when either their numbers are excessive, or the abuses of them such as cannot be taken away, without abolishing the Ceremony it self. Several instances of this may be given, as to name onely Images in Churches, which could not be safely retained at that time, without the danger of idolatrous Worship. For the generality of people in those days were so superstitiously addicted to the worship of Images, that had they been left in Churches, though the worship of them had been expressly forbid, yet infinite numbers of people would have worshipped them notwithstanding. This very reason our Church gives in her Homily against

the peril of Idolatry, *part 3.* of the necessity of removing Images out of Churches, That as well by the origine and nature of Idols and Images themselves, as by the proneness and inclination of mans corrupt nature to Idolatry, it is evident, that neither Images, if they be publickly set up, can be separated, nor men, if they see Images in Temples and Churches, can be stayed and kept from Idolatry. --- Wherefore they which thus reason, though it be not expedient, yet it is lawful to have Images publickly, and do prove that lawfulness by a few picked and chosen men; if they object that indifferently to all men, which a very few can have without hurt and offence, they seem to take the multitude for vile Souls, of whose loss and safeguard no reputation is to be had; for whom Christ yet paid as dearly as for the mightiest Prince, or the wisest and best learned of the Earth. And they that would have it generally to be taken for indifferent, that a very few take no hurt of it, though infinite multitudes besides perish thereby, shew that they put little difference between the multitudes of Christians and bruised Beasts, whose danger they do so little esteem. Thus in another place of the same Homily; What shall I say of them who lay stumbling-blocks where before there were none, and set snares for the feet, nay for the souls of weak and simple ones, and work the danger of everlasting destruction, for whom our Saviour shed his most precious Blood? where better it were that the Arts of painting, plaistering, carving, or graving, never had been found out or used, than one of them whose Souls in the sight of God are so precious, should

should by occasion of Images or Pictures, perish and be lost.

This makes it very evident, that our Church in her Reformation had a peculiar regard to the care of mens Souls, and therefore removed whatever might prove a snare and temptation to them, and so hazard their eternal salvation. Our Reconciler transcribes these Passages out of that Homily, and endeavours from thence to prove, that the Church by a parity of Reason, and out of care of mens Souls, ought to part with all other Ceremonies, since the imposition of them tempts men to Schism, which is a damning sin. But is there no difference between these two cases? The Church must not retain that, which though it may possibly be innocently used by some men, yet is apt in its own nature to tempt the generality of men to sin; as Images in Churches are to tempt men to Idolatry: and the Church must not retain such Ceremonies which serve to very good purposes in Religion, and are not apt in their own natures to serve any bad one, because there are some men who will not submit to such Impositions, but will separate from the Church, and involve themselves in the guilt of a damning Schism, if such Ceremonies be imposed. Let us put a like case, and see how this Argument will look then. A Father, out of charity to the Soul of his Son, must not carry him to, nor indulge him in going familiarly to the Tavern or the Stews, because though it is possible to go to those places without being drunk or unchast, yet

Rec. p. 31, 32.

very few young men can resist such temptations; and therefore he apparently hazards his Son by it. Now suppose from hence our Reconciler should argue, that by a parity of Reason he ought not to command his Son to go to School, nor to do any thing which he strongly suspects he will not obey him in, though it be otherwise very innocent and useful, and fit to be commanded, because this involves his Son in the guilt of disobedience to his Father, which is a damning sin, and will destroy his Soul, as well as Adultery or Drunkenness; What would all Parents think of such a Casuist as this? At this rate a disobedient Son must give Laws to his Father, as well as a Schismatick give Laws to the Church: Superiours must not in charity command any thing, but what Inferiours please to obey: for if they disobey, and be damned for their disobedience, those Superiours who commanded what their Inferiours would not obey, are guilty of their damnation.

But the plain Answer to it, is this: The obligations of Charity extend no farther than our own part and duty does: for we cannot shew our charity in that which is not our duty, nor in our power to help or hinder. Whatever evil happens to others upon the neglect of our duty, or the uncharitable performance of it, is imputable to us; but if other men by the neglect of their own duty, accidentally suffer by what we have wisely and charitably done; the sin and guilt, as well as misery, is their own. Otherwise it were a dan-

dangerous thing for us to do our duty, unless we were sure that other men would do theirs. For the wise and charitable discharge of our duty, may in most cases aggravate the sin and condemnation of those who will not do theirs. It may at this rate prove the most uncharitable thing in the world, to reprove an obstinate and incorrigible sinner, or to attempt to convince an obdurate and inflexible Schismatick; because such reproofs, and such means of conviction, if they do not reclaim them, make their sin more inexcusable.

Thus it is between Governours and Subjects. It is the duty of Governours to govern, and they must do it wisely and charitably; and it is the duty of Subjects to obey. If the Subjects suffer by the ill government of their Superiours, it is their fault; if they suffer by their own disobedience, the fault also is their own. If the Governours of the Church set up Images in Churches, which is a great temptation to people to worship them, especially if they have been educated in such an idolatrous Worship; this is very uncharitably done, and argues little care of mens Souls: but if they give wise and charitable Rules of Worship, and people will not obey them, but divide themselves from the Church, and unite in a Schism; if they be damned for their Disobedience and their Schism, the fault is their own.

2. Let us now consider what Rules our Church observed in retaining Ceremonies; and if she have acted as charitably there too, I know not where our Reconciler will fix the charge
of

of uncharitableness upon the Church. Now she has retained but very few, and therefore they are not burdensom by their numbers, nor do they obscure or adulterate the simplicity of the Christian Worship. She has retained onely those which are *for decent Order and Edification*, since *without some Ceremonies it is not possible to keep any Order or quiet Discipline in the Church*. She has retained such as are venerable for their antiquity and age, and have a plain and easie signification; are *neither dark nor dumb Ceremonies, but so set forth, that every man may understand what they do mean, and to what use they do serve*. For though meer signification, without any other use, is a very little thing in Christian Religion, yet when the decent circumstances of Worship, which are necessary to the orderly performance of it, have an additional signification also, suitable to the nature of the Worship we are engaged in, it is an additional ornament and advantage to the Ministry, as I have already discours'd. Nay, the Church has taken care, as she says, to appoint such Ceremonies as are least capable of being abused to superstition. *That it is not like that they in time should be abused as others have been*. In which case she has left a liberty to alter them, if they should be so abused; which is the onely reasonable occasion there can be for such an alteration. Now how any Church can be more easie and charitable in her Impositions, I confess, I cannot tell; and if that be a charitable Church, whose Impositions are easie and charitable, which

which are innocent and useful themselves, and not apt to tempt men to any sin, then the Church of *England* is very charitable, though Dissenters should be damned for their wilful and causeless Schism.

But besides this, as far as it is possible to prevent the Cavils of evil-minded men, our Church has taken care to explain the meaning of the signe of the Cross in Baptism, and kneeling at receiving the Lords Supper, to remove all suspicions of any superstitious opinions about them; which is an Argument of great charity, and great care of the Souls of men. But you will say, Had it not been greater charity to the Souls of men, not to have retained such Ceremonies as needed explication, than to explain the meaning of them, which may not give satisfaction to all men of the lawfulness of their use? This were something to the purpose indeed, were there any thing doubtful in their signification: but it is not the obscurity of these Ceremonies, but the perverseness of men who endeavour to find out some superstition in them; which makes such Declarations of the Church more charitable still, as being a condescension not to the ignorance, but to the forwardness of her Children. Though to worship the Cross be Idolatry, to use it as a Charm and Spell favour of Superstition, yet to use it as a venerable Badge of our Christian Profession, is neither; and no man can reasonably suspect that it is used otherwise in Baptism. To kneel at the Sacrament is a decent posture of receiving, and can
never

never be suspected as an act of Worship to the Bread, in those who believe that after consecration it is Bread still, and not the natural Body of Christ: for to worship Bread, which we believe to be nothing but Bread, would be a more absurd Idolatry than the Papists are guilty of, who believe it not to be Bread, but the Body of Christ. This reason the Church assigns for it, in the second Common-Prayer-Book of Edward the Sixth: *Although no Order can be so perfectly devised, but it may by some, either for their ignorance and infirmity, or else for malice and obstinacy, be misconstrued, depraved, and interpreted in a wrong part; yet because brotherly charity willeth, that so much as conveniently may be, offences should be taken away, therefore we, willing to do the same, declare that in kneeling at the Sacrament no adoration of the Elements is intended.* Thus our Reconciler cites this passage; and I must trust him at present, because I have not the Book by me: but this sufficiently proves what I alleadge it for, that our Church did not adde this explication, as apprehending any necessity of it, but to prevent the absurd interpretations of ignorant or malicious Cavillers. But what our Reconciler adds, *Who can tell why this whole Preface in our present Common-Prayer-Book is left out,* is only a spiteful insinuation of I know not what; since the same Declaration is as large and full in our Common-Prayer-Book, as words can make it. But he proceeds: and *Why that Charity which willeth, that as much as conveniently may be, offences should be taken away, should not will*

Recon. p. 268.

will also the taking away or the abatement of unnecessary Ceremonies, or alteration of scrupled expressions in our Liturgie? I am not bound to answer these trifling Cavils as often as he repeats them; but I think every man of sense will see some little difference between making the Rules and Orders of the Church as inoffensive as may be, and destroying all decent and orderly Constitutions: the first is such a Charity as becomes Governours, the second is nothing better than the dissolution of Government. But of Scruples, more presently.

Thus our Reconciler observes, that the Convocation held An. 1640. speaking of the laudable custom of bowing with the body, in token of our reverence of God, when we come into the place of publick Worship, saith thus: "In the practice or admission of this Rite, we desire the Rule of Charity, prescribed by the Apostle, may be observed; which is, That they who use this Rite, despise not them who use it not; and they who use it not, condemn not them who use it. Now, saith the Author of the mischief of Impositions, I would gladly hear a fair reason given why the Apostle should prescribe the Rule of Charity to be observed in this one Rite or Ceremony, more than another. And our Reconciler very modestly adds, The Apostle prescribes a Rule, and they will make use of it when and where, and in what cases they please; and in others, where it is as useful, lay it by like one of their vacated Canons. This is wonderful deference to Authority! But however, this is another instance of the Churches Charity

rity and moderation, at least in this one Rite ;
 and methinks it deserved a little more civility,
 than to be turned into an Argument of Re-
 proach. But cannot our Reconciler guess at
 any reason for this difference, why she should
 grant that liberty in this one Rite, which she
 denies in other cases ? Why then I'll tell him
 one ; Because it is more capable of such an in-
 dulgence than other Ceremonies are : for it is
 an act of private Worship, though performed
 in the publick Church ; and therefore differ-
 ent usages in such matters do not disturb the
 Order and Decency of publick Worship. When
 we offer up our common Worship to God,
 which is the act of the whole Congregation,
 it is fitting that there should be one Rule and
 Order observed : for Uniformity is necessary
 to the Decency of Worship, and to the Unity
 of it ; but there is no necessity that all mens
 private Devotions should be alike. And it is
 possible to think of another reason too ; That
 this bowing the body in reverence to God,
 when we enter into his house, is properly a
 Ritual or Ceremony, that is, an exterior ac-
 tion or thing, not merely a circumstance of
 Worship : it is it self an external Rite of
 Worship, not the circumstance of any other
 act. It may be very decent to bow our body
 in reverence to God , when we enter his
 house, but it is not a decent circumstance of
 religious Worship ; and therefore there is not
 the same necessity that the Church should de-
 termine it, as there is that she should deter-
 mine the necessary circumstances of action,
 with-

without which the Worship of God cannot be decently performed : and it seems to me to be an Argument of great wisdom in the Church, that she has not made an uniformity in this Rite, as necessary as in the other Ceremonies of Religion, since there is not an equal necessity for it. And I further adde, that the Apostles Rule of Charity, not to judge and censure one another upon such different usages, does not relate to those Ceremonies which are also the decent circumstances of religious actions, and so are necessary to the uniformity of publick Worship, which must not be neglected out of a pretence of Charity ; but it may extend to such Rites as these : which shews the great judgment of our Church in applying this Rule to one case, and not to the other ; and argues great ignorance, as well as impudence, in our Reconciler to censure it : which I shall largely prove, when I come to answer his fourth Chapter.

And because our Reconciler so often mentions not onely the abatement of the Ceremonies, but the alteration of some scrupled expressions in the Liturgy, without mentioning what those are ; I can give no other answer to it, but to represent that account which is given us of those late alterations which were made in our Liturgy, as we find it in the Preface to the Common-Prayer-Book. *Our general aim therefore in this undertaking, was not to gratifie this or that Party in any of their unreasonable demands, but to do that which to our best understanding we conceived might most tend to*
the

the preservation of peace and unity in the Church, the procuring of Reverence, and exciting of Piety and Devotion in the publick Worship of God, and the cutting off occasion from them that seek occasion of cavil or quarrel against the Liturgie of our Church.--- Most of the alterations were made--- for the more proper expressing of some words or phrases of ancient usage, in terms more suitable to the Language of the present times, and the clearer explanation of some other words or phrases which were either of doubtful signification, or otherwise liable to misconstruction. And what other Rule our Reconciler would have the Church observe in altering scrupled phrases, I cannot tell: for if she must alter, while some people cease to scruple, she must alter if all, or rather take it quite away.

3. But you will say, It is at least a breach of Charity to impose such Rites and Ceremonies as are scrupled by great numbers of Christians, and the imposition of which occasions a formidable Schism in the Church. As for the Schisms and Divisions which are said to be occasioned by the imposition of these Ceremonies, I shall consider that in the next Chapter: My designe at present leads me to consider the Mistakes and Scruples of Christians, and how far Governours ought to have any regard to them; and for the explication of this, there are several things to be observed.

1. I readily grant, that the Church ought not to command any thing which is of a doubtful or suspicious nature:—for where the thing

thing is doubtful, her Authority to command is doubtful too. Or rather, it is certain that the Church has no Authority in doubtful matters: for her Authority can be no larger than her Commission; and it is no part of her Commission to teach or command things which are doubtful. Thus it may well be doubted whether it be lawful to set up Images in Churches, to pray before a Crucifix to excite and quicken our Devotions, though we have no intention to pay any religious homage to them. For the same reason, the Church cannot by her Authority adopt doubtful Propositions into Articles of Faith, and require all Christians to believe them as the necessary terms of Communion. To this purpose our Reconciler, at his usual impertinent rate of Citations, alleadges several passages out of P. 247, &c. Mr. *Chillingworth*, to prove that no doubtful Propositions ought to be made Articles of Faith, or necessary terms of Communion: in which I perfectly agree with Mr. *Chillingworth*, but can by no means see how it follows from hence, that because the Church must not make new Articles of Faith, therefore she must not prescribe the necessary Rules of Worship; that because she must not impose things which are of a doubtful nature, therefore she must not command any thing, which some people raise doubts and scruples about.

But our Reconciler thinks that it is a sufficient evidence that a thing is doubtful, and that the peace and unity of the Church ought not to be suspended upon the determination

of it, when there are a great number of men doubt of it, and the thing is disputed and controverted, and Arguments produced on both sides: and if this be so, there is not any Article of our Faith but what is doubtful; it is very doubtful whether there be a God, and whether Christ were the true *Messias* or an Impostor; for we know there are a great many Atheists, Jews, Turks, and Infidels in the world. And if it be an Argument against the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, that Dissenters dispute against them; if this prove, *That the peace and unity of the Church ought not to be suspended upon submission to them, and that the decision of the Controversie concerning them, was not intended as a necessary means for the peace and unity of the Church of God in these Kingdoms; farewel to all certainty in Religion.*

P. 239, 240.

But he proves this by an Argument transcribed from *Dr. Stillingfleet's Irenicum*, a book which certainly did such great service at the time when it was written, to draw men on to a calm consideration of things, and whose Reverend Author has done such excellent service since to the Church of *England* by his incomparable Writings both against Papists and Fanaticks, that whatever fault there may be in it, both the Book and the Author have merited something more than a pardon; especially since that Book stands now upon its own legs, and can derive no authority from that great Name, he having sufficiently declared his dislike, and, I think, sufficiently answered some

some principal parts of it himself. And though I cannot assent to every Proposition in the *Irenicum*, as I am pretty sure the Author himself does not, yet I can by no means think that it deserves all that clamour which some men have raised against it. I am sure it never can make any man a Dissenter; and I think it much more desirable, and more for the interest of the Church, that men should conform upon the Principles of the *Irenicum*, than that they should continue Dissenters. I could not forbear saying this once for all, out of that sincere honour I have for that excellent person, who has met with very ill usage from some men, who either envy his deserved praises, or hope to make themselves considerable by being his Rivals. But let us hear what the Argument is.

Where probable Arguments are brought for the maintaining one part of an Opinion as well as another, though the Arguments brought be not convincing for the necessary entertaining either part to an unbiassed understanding, yet the difference of their Opinions is Argument sufficient that the thing contended for is not so clear as both Parties would make it to be on their own sides; and if it be not a thing of necessity to salvation, it gives men ground to think that the final decision of the matter in controversy was never intended as a necessary means for the peace and unity of the Church of God.

Now I confess, I see no reason why I may not assent to all this: for if the Arguments be only probable on both sides, and such as are

not convincing either way to an unbiassed judgment, it is a signe the thing is doubtful, though some men may be very confident both ways; and nothing that is doubtful can be necessary to salvation, nor can the final decision of it be necessary to the peace of the Church. But if the Arguments on one hand to an unbiassed and disinterested judgment, be plain and certain, and the Objections on the other hand nothing but empty and trifling Cavils, which is the true case between the Church of England and Dissenters in the dispute of Ceremonies; if the dissent of these men shall be thought sufficient to render this matter uncertain, we shall be condemned to eternal and unavoidable Scepticism.

But our Reconciler says, *Let any man peruse the Arguments of the Dissenters against Conformity to symbolical Ceremonies, and he will find them strengthened by the suffrages of many grave and learned Divines both of our own and other Churches.* As for the grave Divines of other Churches, let them mind their own business, for their Authority is nothing to us; and as for the Divines of our own Church, who strengthen the Dissenters Arguments against Ceremonies, who they are, or how many, or how grave and learned they are, I cannot tell. He has indeed transcribed several Sayings out of some of our Divines, to plead for the relaxation of such Impositions; but none that I know of, to strengthen the Dissenters Arguments; which no Divine in our Church can do, who honestly conforms himself.

Well,

Well, but how does this Passage in the *Irenicum* countenance this reconciling designe? Suppose there be probable reasons on both sides, where yet it is necessary to act one way, what must be done in this case? must every man be left to do as he pleases? So says the Reconciler, that this is the onely way to peace; but the *Irenicum* says the quite contrary; That the way to peace cannot be by leaving all *Irenicum, p. 3.* absolutely to follow their own ways: for that were to build a Babel instead of Salem, Confusion instead of Peace. It must be then by convincing men; that neither of those ways to peace and order, which they contend about, is necessary by way of divine command (though some be as a means to an end) but which particular way or form it must be, is wholly left to the prudence of those in whose power and trust it is to see the peace of the Church be secured on lasting foundations. Which is a peremptory determination against our Reconciler, who very rarely quotes any Author, without wresting his words to another sense, than what was intended.

If every thing were doubtful, of which some men doubt, and nothing must be determined which is thus doubtful, it were impossible that there should be any external form and constitution of a Church, or any external Worship. If it be a good Argument that a thing is doubtful, because some men doubt of it, methinks it is as good an Argument that that is not doubtful, which no body doubts of; and thus symbolical Ceremonies, as our Reconciler calls them, are past all doubt: for no Christian ex-

ver had any doubt about them for above fifteen hundred years; which is time enough in this way to prove the certainty of any thing. And though some Christians begin to doubt, and to invent Arguments to countenance their doubts, after fifteen hundred years; yet this is no reason for the Church to doubt also.

Well, but if mens doubting be not an Argument that the thing whereof they doubt is doubtful, how shall we know what is doubtful and what not? I answer: Where there is no positive evidence, and the probabilities or difficulties are great on both sides, there is sufficient reason for doubting; and in such cases I think the Church has not authority to determine either way, when the doubt is about the lawfulness or unlawfulness, the truth or falshood of things: for the authority of the Church cannot alter the nature nor the evidence of things; and therefore ought not to determine that to be lawful, which it is equally probable may be unlawful; nor that to be true, which has equal proofs of its being false. But this cannot concern the controversy about the lawful use of some Ceremonies in religious worship, for which we have as plain and positive evidence, as we can desire for a thing of this nature, as I have already shewn: and therefore any mens doubting of this, makes it no more doubtful, than their doubts about any plain and necessary Article of Faith, renders that also doubtful and suspicious.

2. Though the Church must not command any thing which is of a doubtful nature, yet the

the doubts and scruples or mistakes of Christians ought to have no influence upon acts of Government. There cannot be a more unreasonable and senseless Imposition upon Governours than this, which makes all Government the most arbitrary, and precarious, and useles thing in the world. If this Rule were allowed, what work would it make in Kingdoms and Families, when Princes, Parents, and Masters, must command nothing which their Subjects, Children, or Servants scruple to do! That which makes Government necessary is, that the generality of mankind do not know how to govern themselves; but this Principle makes all men their own Governours, and makes it unlawful for any Authority to impose any thing upon their Subjects which they have not a mind to: for it is an easie matter to scruple, or to pretend to scruple, whatever we have no mind to do: and yet if we will believe our Reconciler, here is no distinction to be made between men who are really weak and scrupulous, and those who pretend to it: for it is an uncharitable thing, it seems, whatever evidence we have for it, to charge those men with obstinacy, malice, or perverseness, who pretend to Scruples and tender Consciences. But to what purpose has God committed any Authority to some certain persons in Church or State, if they must not govern according to the best judgment they have of things, but must be governed by the mistakes or scruples of those whom they ought to govern? If they must

Recon. p. 109,
&c.

not command what is innocent, useful, and convenient, when those whom they ought to command, do not think it so? This all men will acknowledge to be intolerable in the State; and I challenge our Reconciler to shew me any wise reason why the Secular Powers must have no regard to mens scruples in making useful Laws, and the Governours of the Church must. Whoever considers how wild, unreasonable, and fantastical some mens mistakes and scruples are, must needs think it a very ridiculous Constitution of Government, which has any regard to them. It is in the Government of the Church, as it is in the State, and as it must of necessity be in all Governments. Those who have authority to govern, must take care to do it wisely and charitably; and those who are subject, must obey in all things lawful, without cavilling at their Superiours commands, where they are not manifestly contrary to some divine Law: and if there happens any hard case, as such cases will happen under all Governments, God, who is our supreme Governour, will take care to rectifie it, when the Governours of Church or State cannot do it, without loosening the Sinews of Government. As for instance: The Governours of the Church must take care to prescribe Rules for the decent performance of religious Worship; and in such an Age of mistakes and scruples as this, it is possible some very honest but weak Christians may take offence at the best and most prudent Constitutions, and separate from the Church,

Church, and involve themselves in the guilt of Schism; what must the Church do in this case? Must she alter her Laws as often as any Christians pretend to scruple them? or must she make no Laws about such matters, but suffer every Christian to worship God as he pleases? This is to renounce their Government, because some Christians will not obey; or to make Government contemptible and ridiculous, when it must yield to mens private fancies and scruples. And yet it is very hard, that the Government of the Church, which is instituted for the care of mens Souls, should prove a snare and temptation to them, and occasion their eternal ruine and misery. But I hope that there is no necessity for either of these. Governours must do their duty, must take care to make such Laws as are for the advantage of Religion, and the edification of the Church, and are least liable to any just offence: and if after all their care, some very honest men may take offence, and fall into Schism, we must leave them to the mercy of God, who will make allowances for all favourable cases. The Church can give no relief in such cases, without destroying her Authority and Government, and giving advantage to Knaves and designing Hypocrites to disturb the best constitutions of things; but God can distinguish between honest men and Hypocrites: and if men be sincerely honest, and do fall into Schism through an innocent mistake, God will be merciful to them; which secures the final happiness of good men, and yet maintains

tains the sacredness and reverence of Authority. For when men know that nothing can justify a Schism, and nothing can plead their pardon with God, but great honesty, and some invincible mistake, it will make all honest men careful how they separate from the Church, and diligent in the use of all means for their satisfaction; without which, no man can pass with Almighty God for an honest Separatist: and I doubt not, but were men convinced of this, it would sooner cure our Schisms, than the removal of all scrupled Ceremonies. But it is so far from being the duty of Church-Governours to take any notice of mens scruples, when there is no just occasion for them, that they ought not to allow any man to scruple their authority in such matters; which weakens Government, and opens a gap for eternal Schisms to enter.

Chap. 8. p. 259. It is very true, as our Reconciler has proved at large in a whole Chapter to that purpose, that the Church in several Ages has made great alterations in the Externals and Rituals of Religion; but how this serves his Cause, I cannot tell. No body questions but the Church has done this, and that she had authority to do it, and that she has so still, when she sees just occasion to do it: but the Question is, Whether she must do this as often as every little Reconciler, or every scrupulous Christian demands such an alteration. The Question is, Whether unreasonable scruples and prejudices be a necessary reason for the Church to make such alterations. And if he can give any one example

example in all Antiquity, that the Church altered her Constitutions for no other reason but to comply with the scruples of private Christians, he will say something to the purpose. No, in those days private Christians did not use to scruple any Ceremonies, which the Governours of the Church thought fit to appoint; but Bishops made or repealed Laws about such matters, as they thought most expedient for the good government of the Church. The Question is, Whether they repealed all Laws for the Order and Decency of Worship, or renounced their Authority to make such Laws, in compliance with those who denied any such Authority to the Church. Again, the Question is, Whether in the same Church they allowed all private Christians to worship God after what manner they pleased, according to their own private persuasions and apprehensions of these things; that those who are for a May-pole, may have a May-pole, as our Reconciler very reverently expresses it. If he can say any thing to these points, I confess, it will be to his purpose; and therefore I would desire him to consider of it, now he knows what he is to prove.

But though his History of those alterations which the Church in several Ages has made in the Rituals and Ceremonies of Religion, would not serve his main designe, yet it highly gratified his pride and insolence to trample upon a great man, whom he thought he had taken at some advantage.

The Reverend Dean of St. Pauls assigns some

Hist. of Sepa-
ration, p. 16.

Recon. p. 297.

some reasons why the Church of England still retains the use of some Ceremonies. His first reason is *out of a due reverence to Antiquity. They would hereby convince the Papists they did put a difference between the gross and intolerable Superstitions of Popery, and the innocent Rites and Practices which were observed in the Church before.* This, says our Reconciler, is very like Hypocrisie, to pretend to retain three Ceremonies of humane institution, out of respect to their supposed antiquity, whilst we reject as many, which were unquestionably of a divine original, and therefore sure of an antiquity which more deserves to be revered. Truly if our Church has parted with any thing of a divine original, I think she has reformed too far: but will our Reconciler say, that every thing that was an Apostolical Practice, is of divine original? Bishop Taylor, to whom he so often appeals, would have taught him otherwise, as I have already observed; who says, that the Apostles in ordering religious Assemblies, and in prescribing such Rules of Worship as they did not immediately receive from Christ, acted but as ordinary Ministers of the Church; and what they prescribed, obliged no longer than the reason and expediency of the things; and the Governours of the Church in after-Ages had as full and ample Authority as the Apostles themselves in such matters.

But does the Dean say, that these Ceremonies were retained onely for their antiquity? then indeed the Reconciler's Objection had been strong, that other Ceremonies which are

as ancient as they, should have been retained also. But is it not a just reverence to Antiquity, that when our Church had for other reasons determined what number of Ceremonies to retain, and for what ends and purposes, she chuses to use such Ceremonies as were anciently used in the Christian Church, rather than to invent any new ones? for it had been an affront to the ancient Church, to have rejected those Ceremonies which had been made venerable by ancient use, when they would equally or better serve those ends we designe, than any new ones. This is the very account our Church gives of it. Having given the reason why she retained some Ceremonies still (as I have already observed) she answers that Objection why she has retained some old Ceremonies. *If they think much that any of the old remain, and would rather have all devised new; then such men granting some Ceremonies convenient to be had, surely where the old may be well used, there they cannot reasonably reprove the old onely for their age, without bewraying of their own folly. For in such a case they ought rather to have reverence to them for their antiquity, if they will declare themselves to be more studious of Unity and Concord than of Innovations and new Fanglest, which (as much as may be with true setting forth of Christ's Religion) is always to be eschewed. Let our Reconciler consider whether this be Hypocrisie, or true and sober reasoning.*

Pref. to the
Com. Prayer-
book about
Ceremonies.

2. The Dean's second reason is, *To manifest the justice and equity of the Reformation, by letting*

ving their Enemies, *for that they did not break Communion with them for meer indifferent things.* Or as our Reconciler adds, *That they left the Church of Rome no farther than they left the ancient Church.* Which the Dean does not say under that Head, nor any thing like it. But yet here he takes advantage, and says, *It is manifest, that we have left off praying for departed Saints, the Unction of the sick, the mixing water with the Sacramental Wine, &c. with many other things which were retained in the ancient Church, and in the Liturgie of Edward the Sixth* (he should have said the first Liturgy,) *and which are things indifferent retained in the Roman Church.* But is our Reconciler in good earnest? I fear, the next Book we shall have from him, will be the *Roman Catholick Reconciler.* Are all these things, as used in the Roman Church, indifferent? Is praying for the dead, as it is joyned with the Doctrine of Purgatory and Merit, in the Church of Rome, a thing indifferent? Is the Sacrament of Extrem Unction an indifferent thing? Are their Blessings and Exorcisms, and such-like Ceremonies, abused by the Church of Rome to the absurdest Superstitions, indifferent things? Our Reformers at first, in veneration to the Primitive Church, in which some of these Ceremonies were used, did retain the use of them in the first Liturgy of Edward the Sixth; but upon more mature deliberation, finding how impossible it was to restore them to their primitive use, and to purge them from the superstitious abuses of the Church

Church of Rome, to which their people were still addicted, had them all aside: and for this they are reproached by our Reconciler. Some men would have been called *Papists in Masquerade* for half so much as this.

But what is this to the Dean's reason, *That we do not break Communion with them for meer indifferent things?* For certainly to retain three indifferent Ceremonies, though we should reject five hundred more equally indifferent, is a sufficient proof that we do not quarrel nor break Communion for indifferent things, considered as indifferent, which is all that the Dean meant by it.

But he has a sting at some others besides the Dean, though whom he means, I cannot well tell: but he says, *Some of our Church senselessly pretend we cannot change these Ceremonies, because they have been once received and owned by the Church.* I suppose he means the Catholick Church; and though I think it is too much to say, we cannot change what has been once received, (for the Church of this Age has as much Authority as the Church of former Ages had) yet, I think, what has been received by the Catholick Church, ought not, but upon very great reasons, to be rejected by any particular Church.

But now had our Reconciler been honest, he might have made a great many useful Remarks upon this History of ancient Ceremonies, for the conviction of Dissenters. He might have observed, that even in the Apostles days there were several Ceremonies used of Aposto-

sing their Enemies: *See* that they did not break Communion with them for meer indifferent things. Or as our Reconciler adds, *That they left the Church of Rome no farther than she left the ancient Church.* Which the Dean does not say under that Head, nor any thing like it. But yet here he takes advantage, and says, *It is manifest, that we have left off praying for departed Saints, the Visitation of the sick, the mixing water with the Sacramental Wine, &c. with many other things which were retained in the ancient Church, and in the Liturgie of Edward the Sixth* (he should have said the first Liturgy,) *and which are things indifferent retained in the Roman Church.* But is our Reconciler in good earnest? I fear, the next Book we shall have from him, will be the *Roman Catholick Reconciler.* Are all these things, as used in the Roman Church, indifferent? Is praying for the dead, as it is joyned with the Doctrine of Purgatory and Merit, in the Church of Rome, a thing indifferent? Is the Sacrament of Extrem unction an indifferent thing? Are their Blessings and Exorcisms, and such-like Ceremonies, abused by the Church of Rome to the absurdest Superstitions, indifferent things? Our Reformers at first, in veneration to the Primitive Church, in which some of these Ceremonies were used, did retain the use of them in the first Liturgy of Edward the Sixth; but upon more mature deliberation, finding how impossible it was to restore them to their primitive use, and to purge them from the superstitious abuses of the Church

Church of Rome, to which their people were still addicted, had them all aside: and for this they are reproached by our Reconciler. Some men would have been called *Papists in Masquerade* for half so much as this.

But what is this to the Dean's reason, *That we do not break Communion with them for meer indifferent things?* For certainly to retain three indifferent Ceremonies, though we should reject five hundred more equally indifferent, is a sufficient proof that we do not quarrel nor break Communion for indifferent things, considered as indifferent, which is all that the Dean meant by it.

But he has a sting at some others besides the Dean, though whom he means, I cannot well tell: but he says, *Some of our Church senselessly pretend we cannot change these Ceremonies, because they have been once received and owned by the Church.* I suppose he means the Catholick Church; and though I think it is too much to say, we cannot change what has been once received, (for the Church of this Age has as much Authority as the Church of former Ages had) yet, I think, what has been received by the Catholick Church, ought not, but upon very great reasons, to be rejected by any particular Church.

But now had our Reconciler been honest, he might have made a great many useful Remarks upon this History of ancient Ceremonies, for the conviction of Dissenters. He might have observed, that even in the Apostles days there were several Ceremonies used of Aposto-

Apostolical institution, which yet had not a divine but humane Authority; and therefore were afterwards disused or altered by the Church: That in all Ages of the Christian Church, there have been greater numbers of Ceremonies used, and those much more liable to exception than are now retained in the Church of *England*: That the Church has always challenged and exercised this Authority in the Externals of Religion; and therefore there has not been any Age of the Church since the Apostles, with which our Dissenters could have communicated upon their Principles. This had been done like an honest man, and a true Reconciler; but it is wonderful to me, that he who can find so many good words for the Church of *Rome*, can find none for the Church of *England*.

3. It may so happen, that some things must be determined by publick Authority, which are matter of doubt and scruple to some professed Christians. When I say, Authority must determine such things, I mean, if they will do their duty, and take care of the publick Decency and Uniformity of Worship, without which there can be no Decency. This is evident in such an Age as this, wherein some men scruple every thing which relates to publick Worship, but what they like and fancy themselves. To be uncovered at Prayers, is as considerable a scruple to some Quakers, as to kneel at the Sacrament is to other Dissenters. This, it seems, was a Dispute in the Church of *Corinth* in *St. Paul's* days, but the

the Apostle made no scruple of determining that question; notwithstanding that, and yet praying covered or uncovered, are but circumstances of Worship, as kneeling or sitting at the Sacrament are; and if I had a mind to argue this point with our Reconciler, I think I could prove them as indifferent circumstances as the other. For the reason the Apostle assigns for the mens praying uncovered, and the women covered, that one was an Emblem of Authority, the other of Subjection, (which makes it a symbolical Ceremony, as our Dissenters speak) is quite contrary among us, though it were so in the Apostles days, and is so still in some Eastern Countries. To be uncovered among us, is a signe of Subjection; and to be covered, a signe of Authority: and therefore Princes, Parents, and Masters, are covered, or have their Hats on, while Subjects, Children, and Servants, are uncovered in their presence. And therefore, in compliance with the Apostles reason, men should now pray covered, because that is a signe of civil Dignity and Superiority; whereas we now pray uncovered, in token of a religious Reverence and Subjection to God. Now I would ask our Reconciler, whether our Church may determine that all men shall pray with their Hats off, notwithstanding the scruples of some Quakers? for if the Church must have respect to mens scruples, why not to the scruples of Quakers, as well as of other Dissenters, when one are as reasonable as the other, and this may as well be left undetermined as the other?

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A Vindication of the Rights

for we have the practice of the Apostle for one side of the Question, and his reason for the other. If our Reconciler can think of an Answer to this, so can I too; and so I can also for the Objections against kneeling at the Sacrament: but still here are scruples on both sides, and scruples, for ought I see, equally reasonable; and therefore Governours ought to have an equal regard to them, that is, none at all, if they will discharge their duty in taking care of the Decency of publick Worship.

Dr. Falkner gave another instance of this in the Dispute about leavened or unleavened Bread in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; where he says, *The one sort is necessary to be determined before the administration, or otherwise the Ordinance it self must be omitted.* Here our Reconciler is resolved to try his strength, because the Argument, as managed by this otherwise ingenious man, containeth great mistakes, which being rectified, will set men right in the decision of the Controversie. Here then, if ever, we may expect that our Reconciler will say something to the purpose, because the decision of the Controversie depends on it.

Then, he allows there may be such cases where in genere something is necessary to be determined. I see we shall have fine work of it, when he begins with tricks and fallacies. The Doctor speaks of the determination of a particular circumstance, whether the Sacramental Bread shall be leavened or unleavened; and he talks of determining some cases in genere,

There, that is, that it shall be Bread: for I know not else what he means by his *in genere*. The Question is, Whether any particular thing which is scrupled by some persons, may or ought to be determined; if it may, let him say so plainly, and make the best he can of it.

Well, he grants, that *what is necessary to be determined, must be determined*; but adds, that the Dissenters *do universally deny that it is necessary to determine any of these scrupled Ceremonies*; and they have perfect demonstration for the truth of that denial: for, *necessarium est, quod non potest aliter se habere*; *that only is necessary to be done, which cannot be left undone*. I have seldom met with more trifling and sophistry in so few words: For, 1. Dr. Falkner speaks of a necessity of determining some things, which have no antecedent necessity in their own natures, such as the use of leavened or unleavened Bread in the Sacrament; and our Reconciler grants the Magistrate a power to determine those things which are necessary in their own natures, though that be nonsense: for what is necessary in its own nature, so necessary, that it cannot be left undone, determines it self, without the authority of the Magistrate; the Magistrate may command such things, but they are determined to his hand. Nothing can be determined either way by any Authority, but that which is indifferent and undetermined in its own nature; and I think it a contradiction, that any thing should be indifferent in its own nature, and so

determinable by humane Authority, which has either such a moral or physical necessity, that it cannot be otherwise.

2. Dr. *Falkner* proves, that there may be a necessity of determining some particular manner of doing a thing, before the action can be done; because though no particular mode of doing it may be necessary, yet it cannot be done without some particular mode of doing it. He that will administer the Sacrament, must administer it either in leavened or unleavened Bread: this is physically necessary, that it should be done in one or t^other; and this physical necessity infers a moral necessity of determining which way we will do it, before we can do it: for we cannot at the same time, and in the same individual act, do it both ways; and therefore we must resolve upon one way of doing it, or we cannot do it at all. To disprove this, which is as certain as any demonstration in *Euclide*, our Reconciler says, that nothing must be determined but what is necessary in its own nature to the doing or well doing of any action: As if so be I could travel into the Country, without determining whether I will walk, or ride, or what way I will go, because no one of these is in its own nature so necessary, that I cannot travel without it: for I may chuse which I will, but yet I must chuse some way or other, or I must stay at home. Now should you ask a man who is taking a journey, which way he will go, by land or by water, on foot or horseback, or by Coach; and he should tell you, it is not necessary

cessary to his journey to determine either, for they are all equally indifferent; would you not think the man mad? for though all are indifferent, yet some one is necessary to his journey; and if he will not determine which way he will go, he can never go. This is the case here. Dr. Falkner says, Before we can receive the Lords Supper, it must be determined whether we will receive it in leavened or unleavened Bread. No, says the Reconciler, *any determination by the Magistrate is here unnecessary, because either leavened or unleavened Bread may be received.* Right! and therefore there is no necessity of an universal Law and uniform practice all the world over about this matter; but still whoever administers, or whoever receives the Sacrament, must do it in leavened or unleavened Bread. Suppose then in the same Church and Congregation there should be a dispute about this, as there was between the Greek and Latin Church; and some should scruple to administer or receive in leavened, others in unleavened Bread, what must be done in this case? must the Church determine this matter, or not? or must there in every Congregation be two Ministers, and two Sacraments, one of the leavened, the other of the unleavened Communion? I know not what our Reconciler will say to this; but I am sure either this matter must be determined, notwithstanding the scruples and differing Opinions about it, or there must be a Schismatical disorder and confusion in the same Church, in the very act of Christian Communion.

But how little regard the Apostles themselves (whom I suppose our Reconciler will grant to be a good President for Church-Governours) had to the mistakes and scruples of Christians, when there was a just reason for making any Decrees and Canons, is evident from the practice of that first celebrated Council of *Jerusalem*. The Jews did mightily urge the necessity of circumcising the converted Gentiles, and made it a great scruple of Conscience so much as to eat or drink with them, much less to own them of the same Church and Communion, without Circumcision. Paul and Barnabas were sent to *Jerusalem* to consult the other Apostles about this Question. The Apostles accordingly met together; and after a long debate, determined against the Circumcision of the Gentiles, notwithstanding the Jewish scruples about it. On the other hand, they lay a Burden (for so the Council calls it) upon the Gentile Christians, without any regard to any scruples they might have about it; though, as Dr. *Falkner* shews, there was a fair colour and pretence for many. The Reconciler indeed answers those pretences of scruple, which the Doctor says the Gentile Christians might have, though he sufficiently blunders in it. But what is that to the purpose? the Doctor did not pretend that they were unanswerable, but expressly says, That though these are far from solid Arguments, yet to an indifferent person (for he did not dream of the Protestant Reconciler) may possibly seem as plausible as many exceptions used

15. Acts.

P. 305.

Libertas Eccl.
p. 429.

by some men in other cases: that is, by the Dissenters, in the Dispute of Ceremonies. But the force of the Argument (which our Reconciler conceals, because he could not answer it) is this: That notwithstanding such plausible exceptions and scruples, That Apostolical Sanction was both lawful and honourable, yea though it concerned things indifferent, and was established (as many think) by that Ecclesiastical Authority which they committed to their Successors in the Church.

As for what the Reconciler urges, that this Decree was onely about *necessary things*, it has been sufficiently answered already: for the Decency of publick Worship is a necessary thing, and I think a little more necessary than abstaining from Bloud, which is part of that Decree. And whereas he pretends that the abating our Ceremonies, is necessary upon the same reason which made that Apostolical Decree necessary, *viz.* in order to avoid scandal and offence, I shall largely shew how different these cases are, in answer to his fourth Chapter.

I observe farther, that our Saviour himself, who certainly knew as well as our Reconciler, what indulgence was fit to be used to mens scruples and mistakes, and in what cases Charity did oblige to such an indulgence, yet was so far from complying with the errors and mistakes of the Pharisees, that he seems to have done many things on purpose to oppose their superstitious conceits.

This Argument was urged by Dr. Falkner,

and proposed as an Objection by the Reconciler, though not in the Doctor's words, as he would have his Readers believe, by putting them into a different Character. The Doctor's Argument in his own words, are these:

Libertas Eccl. *p. 415.* *It is truly observed by Ursin, to adde confirmation to erroneous Opinions in the minds of the weak about indifferent things, is a giving offence, or being guilty of an active scandal. Upon this account, though our Saviour knew that his healing, and commanding the man who was healed, to take up his bed on the Sabbath-day, his eating with Publicans and Sinners, and his Disciples eating with unwashed hands, were things in the highest manner offensive to some of the Jews; he practised and allowed these things, in opposition to the Scribes and Pharisees, who in their censures of him, proceeded upon erroneous and corrupt Doctrines vented by them for divine Dictates. Our Reconciler seems conscious to himself, that this was an untoward Argument, as it was stated by the Doctor; and therefore in his Margin he refers his Reader to the place where these words are found, which I have now cited; but yet he durst not trust his Readers with them, but puts the Objection into his own words, which he thought he could better deal with. And that every one may see how unlike they are to Dr. Falkner's Argument, I shall transcribe them also, which are these; Our Saviour knew that his healing on the Sabbath-day gave great offence unto the Pharisees, and also ministered unto them an occasion to traduce his mission, and to persuade the people that*

he was not of God, because he did not keep the Sabbath, although he could as well have done it on the following day: and therefore his Embassadors may still persist in the imposing of our Ceremonies, though others are offended at them. Where we see he durst instance onely in his healing on the Sabbath-day, which he thought he could say something to, but slips over those other instances which the Doctor gave, and conceals the force of the Doctor's Argument, which consists in this, That our Saviour did not think fit by his compliance with men in their errors and mistakes, to confirm them in such superstitious conceits. But let us hear what our Reconciler answers to it.

1. He says, touching the act it self, our Saviour declares affirmatively, that there was a moral goodness in it; that it was to do well, to do good, to save life. But what is this to the purpose? Was there any moral goodness too in commanding the man whom he had cured, to take up his Bed and walk on the Sabbath-day? which we know gave equal offence to the Jews, who told the man that was cured, *It is the Sabbath-day, it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.* Was there any moral goodness in his Disciples eating with unwashen hands? which gave as great offence as any thing else, and yet was publickly justified by our Saviour. Was there any moral goodness in Christ's eating with Publicans and Sinners? Could not he have instructed them in the Will of God, without such a familiar conversation with them, as he knew gave great offence

P. 318.

Joh. 10.

6 Luke 9.

12 Mat. 12.

sence to the Pharisees? Was there any moral goodness in healing on the Sabbath-day, when there was no necessity for doing it just on that day? for our Saviour might have healed them at any other time as well. Yes, says our Reconciler, our Saviour adds, *That the neglect of doing this on the Sabbath, was to do evil, and destroy life.* But where does our Saviour say this? He proposes this Question indeed to them, *Is it lawful on the Sabbath-day to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?* And from hence our Reconciler infers, that not to heal on the Sabbath-day, had been to destroy life; an inference worthy of his great and profound judgment! for I would ask him, Whether our Saviour could be charged with destroying those mens lives whom he did not heal, whether on the Sabbath-day or on any other day? Whether he were under a necessity of healing all that were sick? If he were not, then he might have chosen his times of healing, as well as the persons whom he would heal, without being guilty of destroying any mans life, and so might have forborn healing on the Sabbath-day. Nay, Whether our Saviour could be charged with destroying life, by neglecting to heal a withered hand on the Sabbath-day, which did not endanger life, and the cure of which might have been deferred till the next day, without any hazard? And therefore Sr. Matthew represents the force of our Saviour's Argument onely to prove, that *it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-day.* And if we compare what Sr.

St. Matthew and St. Luke say, we shall find this to be the whole meaning of it: St. Matthew tells us, that when the Jews asked our Saviour, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day,* that he said unto them, *What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* How much then is a man better than a sheep? wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath-day. For if men may save the life of a sheep on the Sabbath-day, there is such a vast disproportion between a man and a sheep, that we may lawfully do any kind office for a man, though it do not extend to rescue him from sudden death. To deliver a man from any bodily infirmity, though it be not mortal, nor absolutely necessary to be done at that time, is more pleasing to God, than to save the life of a sheep; and therefore if one be lawful on the Sabbath-day, we need not doubt but the other is. The answer St. Luke makes our Saviour to return, is exactly to the same sense, though in other words: *Is it lawful on the Sabbath-day to do good, or to do evil?* A strange kind of Question, according to the English sound of the words: for certainly it is never lawful to do evil, on no day of the week; but this is a Hebraism, and signifies this in proper English: *Is it better on the Sabbath-day to do good, or to neglect doing good?* Which is comparatively evil, because though it may have no positive wickedness in it, yet is a less good. Now certainly, the better the day is, the more does

it become us to do the best things on it. And when he adds, *to save life or to destroy it*, it plainly refers to that instance St. Matthew gives of saving the life of a sheep which falls into a pit on the Sabbath-day; which proves the least real kindness done to men on the Sabbath-day to be lawful, because any kindness to a man, is more than to save the life of a Beast. So that all that our Saviour pleads in this case, is only the lawfulness of doing it on the Sabbath-day; and though he knew that the Jews were offended at it, yet he matters not that offence, which was owing to their own superstitious mistakes: and therefore the Church may justifie her self in imposing lawful things, though some men by their superstitious mistakes are offended at it.

And yet we may joyn issue with our Reconciler upon this very point of moral goodness: for the Decency of Worship is morally good, and therefore not to be neglected, whoever scruple a conformity to the Rules of Decency and Order.

II. He answers, *The end or excellent design our Saviour had, made it not onely lawful, but expedient and necessary.* So that in some cases, it seems, there may be wise reasons for doing that, which we know some men will take offence at. Now if it appears that the principal reason our Saviour had, was to rebuke and affront the superstition of these men, then it is a just reason for Church-Governours to continue such Impositions as some men ignorantly

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and superstitiously scruple, though they might be changed and altered without any injury to Religion, because they ought not to countenance men in any false or superstitious opinions about Religion. Let us then consider the Reasons our Reconciler assigns for this. *Sicquid* His first reason, he says, is Bishop Taylor's. That Jesus might draw off and separate Christianity from the Yoke of Ceremonies, by abolishing and taking off the strictest Mosaical Rites, he chose to do many of his Miracles upon the Sabbath, that he might do the work of Abrogation and Institution both at once, and teach the people that the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. Whether this be the Bishops' reason, I cannot tell, for he has not directed us where to find it, and I dare not take his word for it. But whose Argument soever it is, there is certainly a great mistake in it: for our Saviour did not intend in this, to take off the strictest Mosaical Rite: for this Sabbathick rest, which would not allow the doing the most charitable actions, was no Mosaical Rite, but Pharisaical Superstition. Our Saviour justifies himself, that he did nothing but what by the Law of Moses was lawful to be done on the Sabbath-day; and therefore he did nothing in all this towards abrogating the Law of the Sabbath, but only to correct the superstitious observation of it; that is, publicly to shame the Superstition of the Pharisees, though he knew they would be greatly offended at it.

2. And this is the second reason he himself assigns. That Christ is supposed to have taken

this

the people to deliver the poor people from these
superstitions and heavy burden which the Pharisees
had laid upon them in reference to the day.
And this is certainly the true reason; and why
should not the Governours of the Church then
impose the use of indifferent things for the
Decency of Worship to deliver poor peo-
ple from those Superstitions and heavy Bur-
den which our modern Pharisees have laid on
them in reference to religious Worship? For
to say that we must use no Ceremonies of hu-
mane appointment in religious Worship is to
grope Superstition, and as unapproachable a Bur-
den as to forbid the doing of the best actions
on the Sabbath; and is as contrary to the di-
rection of the Gospel, as that was to the Law;
and the offence men superstitiously take at
such things ought to be despised and scorned,
as we learn from the Example of Christ him-
self.

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3. He adds, *This Miracle was still performed*
in the Synagogue; and so before a multitude of
people; who by it were confirmed in the truth of our
Lord's Mission; and it was done when he had
taught the people; and so was done in the confirma-
tion of his Doctrine. Now as to matter of
fact, this is false; for our Saviour on the Sab-
bath-day cured the diseased man who lay by
the Pool of *Bethesda*, which was neither in
the Synagogue; nor before a multitude of peo-
ple; nor when he had taught the people;
5 *Job. 8.* for no body knew of this cure, till
they saw the man who was cured carrying his
Bed; and he himself did not know who it

was

was that had cured him. Here Christ had done a cure privately, and without offence: for it had not been known, had not Christ commanded him to take up his Bed and carry it away with him: which he did in open defiance to the Superstition of the Pharisees, and could have no other reason of doing it.

Had these Miracles been wrought only in confirmation of his Mission, would not another day have served as well for that purpose? He taught the people on other days also, and wrought many Miracles: and never wanted a multitude of people to follow him, when they knew where He was. Well, but it *hardened* them the blindness of their Guides. This is a very good reason: and for the same reason, the Governours of the Church ought in charity to the people, to show them the blindness of their Guides, and therefore not to scruple with them in their superstitious scruples.

III. But the men who were offended at it, were *only Hypocrites, whose hearts were hardened against the truth*. What were they all Hypocrites? was there not one honest man among them? Some Hypocrites there were then, and so there are still: Hypocrites in another sense than these men were Hypocrites. For the Jews did generally believe the unlawfulness of any kind of work on the Sabbath-day, and therefore were really scandalized and offended: but we have a company of Hypocrites among us, who do not really scruple what they pretend to do, but only make a pretence of scruples on occasion to abuse the People, to stir up Schisms

Schisms in the Church, and Factions in the State; men who can conform when they please, and be offended and scandalized when they please. But our Lord did all that could be reasonable to prevent their scandal. No, he did not abstain from working Miracles on the Sabbath-day, which he might have done if he had pleased; but he was so far from avoiding giving offence to them, that he did it on purpose because they were offended at it, and to deliver men from such Superstitions as made them take offence. But he first satisfies them from their own practice on a less occasion, and from the nature of the action; and that with so much evidence and conviction, that they were ashamed, and could not answer him one word. And has our Church been wanting in this, to give satisfaction to Dissenters? How many unanswerable Books have been written in justification of the Constitutions and Worship of our Church? And that our Dissenters are not ashamed, but will talk on, when they have not one wise word to say, is only an Argument that they have less wit, and more impudence, than the Pharisees had. Our Church indeed cannot work Miracles, as Christ did, to convince them; though where plain and convincing Reasons will not do, I doubt Miracles will not do neither: for though the Pharisees were silenced by Christ, yet they were neither convinced by his Reasons nor his Miracles.

Thus I have considered what obligation Charity to the Souls of men lays upon the Governours of the Church to abate those Ceremonies,

te monies, which some men scruple and take offence at. But I must here briefly consider one Principle more of our Reconcilers, which he no-where pretends to prove, but takes for granted; That the Charity of Governours requires the abatement of every thing which is not absolutely necessary in Religion, if it prove an occasion of scruple and offence. For why must the Church be tyed up to what is necessary? Her Power and Authority extends to things which are useful and expedient, though not absolutely necessary; and therefore she may exercise this Power according to the measures of Prudence and Charity, notwithstanding the unreasonable & superstitious scruples of men, which ought to lay no restraint upon the prudent Exercise of Government, as, I think, I have already sufficiently proved; and yet our Reconciler thinks it a sufficient reason why the Church should alter any scrupled Ceremonies, how decent or expedient soever they are, if we cannot prove them to be absolutely necessary.

Thus I have considered the main Principles of his Book, and shall not think my self any further concerned to take notice of them, as often as I meet with them. If these Principles which I have now laid down, hold good, his Book is answered, and the Governours of the Church may exercise their just Authority; and he that is offended, let him be offended. And yet for the more ample satisfaction of all men, what a trifter our Reconciler is, I shall particularly examine his Arguments from Scripture, and shew how impertinent they are to our present Dispute.

CHAP. III.

Concerning a more particular Answer to our Reconciler's Objections against the imposition of indifferent things, when they are an occasion of Discords, Divisions, and Schisms.

THOUGH what I have already discours'd be sufficient to satisfie every impartial Reader, that all our Reconciler's Arguments are meer Fallacies, as proceeding upon false and mistaken Principles; yet for the more abundant satisfaction of all who are willing to be informed, I shall proceed to a more particular examination of his Reasons, why Church-Governours ought to alter or abate such scrupled Ceremonies.

Prot. Rec. c. 1.

I. And first, he declaims very copiously about the great evil and mischief of Divisions; and truly I believe Discord and Division, especially among Christian Brethren, to be as bad a thing as he can possibly describe it to be: But what then? what then? the consequence is very plain: For if Conformists do not conceive it better at least that we should run the hazard of all these dreadful evils, than that we should consent to lay aside the imposition of a few indifferent Ceremonies, or to the altering of a few scrupled expressions in our Liturgie; then must they yield

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up these few Ceremonies, and alien these expressions, to prevent all the aforesaid evils.

1. I answer: Does our Reconciler then think that every thing that is the occasion of Discords and Divisions, must be removed? Is the cause of Divisions in the nature of things, or in the minds of men? And is it not most proper to apply the remedy to the disease? to instruct people that they ought not to quarrel about such matters? that they ought to pay such deference to their Superiours, as cheerfully to obey them in all things, which God has not expressly forbid? For this be done, the Church may alter her Constitutions every year, and be as far off from Peace as now: for while men are ignorant, scrupulous, and quarrellsome, it is impossible for the Governours of Church and State, by the most wise and prudent Constitutions, to prevent Divisions.

2. Is not the contempt of Ecclesiastical Authority, and the rude and unmannerly performance of religious Worship, as great a mischief as Divisions? and yet it is impossible to indulge every scrupulous person, without destroying the Authority of the Church, and the Decency of Worship, as I have already proved. Now I must confess *bona fide* to our Reconciler, that I think all our Divisions about Ceremonies, a less scandal to the Christian Religion, than this would be: for it is better to have a well-constituted Church with Division, than to have none without it.

3. Will our parting with some few Ceremonies,

monies, cure these Divisions which he so much complains of? This our Reconciler cannot undertake for; and it is demonstrable it will not. Is this the onely Controversie, that Presbyterians, Independents, Quakers, and other Sectaries, have with the Church of *England*? Has our Reconciler never read Mr. Baxter's Pleas for Peace, and those other venomous Pamphlets of late date? When the Church of *England* was pull'd down, and these Ceremonies and Episcopacy it self removed out of the way, did it cure Divisions, or increase them? When the Reverend Dean of *St. Pauls* made some Proposals for the ease of scrupulous persons, with reference to these Ceremonies, what thanks had he for it? How many bitter Invectives were written against him? And can we flatter our selves then, that the removal of these Ceremonies would cure our Divisions? And if it will not, why does he urge the evil and mischief of Divisions, to perswade the Church to part with these Ceremonies? Whatever other reasons there may be to part with these Ceremonies, the cure of Divisions can be no reason, when we certainly know before-hand that this will not cure them; unless he thinks the Church bound to act upon such reasons as he himself and every body else knows to be no reason: for nothing can be a reason for doing a thing, which cannot be obtained by doing it.

But because our Reconciler attempts to say something to this in his tenth Chapter, I shall follow him thither. His first Objection is,
That

That the Church will gain little by such an Indulgence; and this I verily believe to be true. Let us hear then what he has to say to it.

And, 1. he takes it for granted, that he has already proved it *the duty of Superiours to condescend in matters of this nature, rather than to debar men from Communion with the Church of Christ for things unnecessary, and which they nowhere are commanded to impose; and if so, let us do our duty, and commit the event to God.* Now I answer, 1. I can by no means grant that he has proved this; and have in part already, and doubt not to make it appear before I have done, that he has not proved it. But 2. Suppose he had proved that it is the duty of Superiours to condescend in such matters, when they can do any good by their condescension; has he proved also that it is their duty to condescend, when they know they can do no good by it? When these Divisions will not be cured by such condescension? which is the present case. The gaining of some very few Profelytes would not countervail the mischief of altering publick Constitutions, though we should suppose it reasonable to condescend to such alterations, when we can propose any great and publick good by doing it.

II. Our Reconciler answers: *Suppose that we P. 327. by yielding in these matters should not reduce one of the Tribe of our dissenting Brethren, yet should we take off their most plausible pretences, and leave them nothing which could be rationally offered as a ground of Separation, or accusation of our proceedings against them. I doubt not but*

our Dissenters despise this Reconciler in their hearts, for thinking that they have no plausible pretences, nor rational grounds of Separation, but the Dispute about Ceremonies: What pretences then have the Dissenters in Scotland, where none of these things are imposed? And are they more quiet and peaceable, or less clamorous in their Complaints, than our Dissenters in England? For whose sake shall the Church make this Experiment, with the loss of their own Orders and Constitutions? for the sake of Dissenters? And what charity is it to them, to discover their obstinacy and hypocrisie, and render them more inexcusable to God and men? Is it to satisfy our selves that the Dissenters are a sort of peevish and obstinate Schismaticks, who will make Divisions without any just pretence or reason for it? We know this already; we know they have no rational grounds for their Separation, though these Ceremonies be not removed. Or do we think to stop their mouths, and escape their reproaches and censures? As if any man could stop the mouth of a Schismatick, or make him blush? Those who are resolved to continue Schismaticks, will always find something to say for it; and let them talk on, the true Sons of the Church will defend her Constitutions with more reason, than Dissenters reproach them.

P. 330.

III. However, he says, *This will intirely stop the mouths of the Layety; and if they be gained, their Preachers must follow.* But who told him this? I am sure Mr. Baxter often complains that

that their Layety is so headstrong and stubborn, that they cannot govern them: and in all my observation, I find that they are as fond of Schism, as zealous against Liturgies and Bishops: as obstinately addicted to the peculiar Opinions and Practices of their Party, as their Preachers are: though I am of our Reconciler's mind, that their Preachers will sooner follow their People to Church, than the People their Preachers. But with what face can our Reconciler say, That these Ceremonies chiefly debar the Layety from full Communion with us, when every one knows the contrary? They can communicate with us, notwithstanding these Ceremonies, when they please, and when they can serve any interest by it: and their Preachers can give them leave to do so: and is it not an admirable reason for altering the establish'd Constitutions of a Church, to gratifie such humourfome Schismatics who can conform when they please?

IV. He adds, *They who at first dissented from the Constitution of our Church, declared they did it purely upon the account of these things, i. e. the Ceremonies still used among us.* This now is a mistake in History: for the first dislike that was taken against our Church, was for the square Cap and Tippet, and some Episcopal habits, which are not talked of in our days, and some of which were used in the Universities, without scruple, in the late blessed times of Reformation. But the use of these Ceremonies was never scrupled till Queen Elizabeth's days, which was the fruit of the

See Dr. Still.
Hist. of Sepa-
ration, p. 4.

P. 25.

former Heats at *Frankford* during the *Marian* Persecution: and these men indeed did dissent (as our Reconciler expresses it) that is, they expressed their dislike of these things, but they did not separate upon it. The first that made any steps to Separation, set up other pretences; complained for want of a right Ministry, a right Government in the Church according to the Scriptures; without which, there can be no right Religion; which are the pretences of our Separatists at this day.

Well, but suppose what he says to be true, what reason is this for altering our Ceremonies at this day? Will our Separatists conform now, if these Ceremonies are taken away? That he dares not say: but we shall gain this by it, *That it will appear that they are not the genuine Off-spring of the old dissenting Protestants*, As if any man, but a Reconciler, were to learn that now, when it has been so often proved upon them, and they themselves scorn and huff at the Argument, and will not have the old Puritans made a Preident for them.

V. *In the Treaty at the Savoy, the abatement of the Ceremonies, and the alteration of some disputable passages in the Liturgie, was all that was contended for*: That is, he means, the Dispute went no farther; but if they had gained these points, we should then have heard more of them. I am sure whoever reads their Petition for Peace, will find all the Principles of Mr. Baxter's late Pleas for Peace; that so I confess I cannot think him so very inconsistent with himself, as some men do. But

But did they plead onely for the alteration of some disputable passages in the Liturgy, when Mr. Baxter himself drew up a new Liturgy? It seems they would first have reformed a Liturgy for us, and then have had liberty to have used a better themselves, and to have been at their liberty too, whether they would have used it or not.

What if Mr. Baxter and his Brethren imposed upon their Prince with a pretended zeal for Peace and Unity, (which they pretend still as much as any men, as the greatest Incendiaries in Church and State commonly do) and with an equivocal use of the name Episcopacy? when we all know what Bishops they mean, not Diocesan, but a new Baxterian invention of Parochial Bishops. Though these pretences at first were plausible, yet the King and the Parliament soon discovered what they would be at; and it is modestly done of our Reconciler to alleadge the Kings Declaration, when the King has since that, more authentickly declared his will and his judgment of these matters by Act of Parliament.

But he further adds: *Moreover, we are informed by Dr. Burnet and Mr. Baxter, in the Life of the Lord Chief Justice Hales, That Dr. Bates, Dr. Manton, and Mr. Baxter, conferring with the Bishop of Chester and Dr. Burton, at the invitation of the Lord Keeper Bridgman, came to an agreement, drawn up in the form of an Act by my Lord Chief Justice, to every word of which they consented; whereupon Mr. Baxter queries,*
Whether

Whether after such agreement, it be ingenuity to say, We know not what they would have? I would give all the Money in my Pocket to see this Act, to every word of which all these persons could consent: But till we know what it is, we may with ingenuity enough say, That we know not what they would have; and I am still apt to believe, that they themselves don't know heither. But what if these three men did consent to such an Act, were they constituted the Representatives of the whole Body of Nonconformists? Could they undertake that the rest of their Brethren should consent too? Or must the Church be bound to alter her Constitutions at the instigation of some few rustic undertaking Dissenters?

But since this story is so often alleadged, I will freely tell what I know of it from Dr. Burton's own mouth, a little before his death.

Having met with this story in some of Mr. Baxter's Writings, (for he hath told it more than once) and going to visit Dr. Burton at his house at Barnes, and finding him alone, among other discourse, I told him how often Mr. Baxter used his name in such a story; and I thought it concerned him to give some account of it, that it might not be represented to his disadvantage. I ask'd him whether he could remember what the terms of accommodation were, or whether he had any Papers about it. He told me, he did not remember particularly what the terms were, but he believed he had his Papers still, though he could not

not at present tell where to find them; but would look for them, and shew 'em me, if he could find them. I desired him in the mean time to tell me what he remembered about the management of that Affair; and he gave me this relation of it:

That when he was Chaplain to my Lord Keeper *Bridgman*, my Lord was very zealous to bring the Presbyterian Dissenters into the Church, and thought it a thing very feasible; and in order to that, did procure a meeting between the Bishop of *Chester* and Mr. *Baxter*, and some others, and commanded him to attend them; which, as being his Chaplain, he could not refuse. But besides this, my Lord drew up some Proposals of a limited Indulgence for the Independants, who, as he easily foresaw, could not be comprehended in any National Establishment; and sent for Dr. *Owen* and some others of that Party, to discourse them about it. They thanked his Lordship for his kindness to them, and desired some time to confer with the rest of their Brethren; and to consider of the Proposals. And after some few days, they returned to my Lord again, and returned their thanks to his Lordship, and gladly accepted of the terms; and did solemnly declare, That if these terms might be granted them, they would acquiesce in it, and never give the least disturbance to the Government.

All this while the Conference with Mr. *Baxter* and his Brethren went on, and in short they could come to no agreement; inasmuch that,

that, he said, my Lord told him in the greatest passion that ever he saw him in, *These men* (meaning the Independants) *from whom I expected the least compliance, thankfully accept the terms proposed; but the others* (Presbyterians, Mr. Baxter and his Brethren) *whom I believed most ready to promote such a peaceable design, will never agree in any thing; and I will never have more to do with them.* And thus that Conference wherein Dr. Burton was concerned, ended without any effect. Whether any thing was done towards an Accommodation at other times, or by other hands, he knew not; but at that time when he was concerned, which Mr. Baxter makes the time of forming this Act, there was nothing agreed on. I press'd him earnestly to search for his Papers, and to make this Story publick, for the vindication of the Memory of the deceased Bishop, and his own Reputation; but I never saw him again, till I found him upon his Death-bed, which was about a fortnight after I had this discourse with him. And now let our Reconciler make the best he can of this story.

2. Another thing whereby it appears how ineffectual this Condescension he pleads for would be to cure our Divisions, is this: *That should we grant these things for the promotion of our Peace and Unity, Dissenters would onely be encouraged by these Concessions to ask more; and we should never know where their demands would end, till they had robbed us of the whole Church-government.* And does not the experience of the

the late Times manifestly confirm this beyond all dispute? And is it reasonable to yield any thing, which is fit to be retained in the Worship of God, to those men who we know before-hand will be satisfied with nothing but the utter ruine of the Church of England? But yet our Reconciler thinks he can persuade men out of their senses. For,

1. Says he, *Is not the power in your own hands to grant or refuse, as you shall see expedient to the great ends of your whole Ministry, the glory of God, the peace of the Church, and the salvation of Souls?* Yes, thanks be to God, yet it is; and the Church has granted what she thinks expedient: which should satisfy our Reconciler, did he not think himself wiser than the Church. For if he will own the power to be in the Church, and that she must stop somewhere, whatever Divisions it occasions, she must judge when it is fit to stop; and every wise man will think it fit to stop, when she has cast every thing out of her Worship which is a just cause of scandal and offence; and if she goes further to satisfy unreasonable and clamorous demands, she can never have a reason to stop, till she has satisfied all Clamours.

2. Yes, says our Reconciler, *she may remove things indifferent and unnecessary*; which is all at present desired. No, say I, she cannot part with all things which are in their own nature indifferent: for some such things are necessary to the Order and Decency of Worship, which must not be parted with; and the Church never

never owned the contrary. She says indeed, that her particular Ceremonies are indifferent and alterable, that we may exchange one decent Ceremony for another when there is reason for it; but the Church ought to alter no Ceremony without reason, nor part with all indifferent Ceremonies for the external Decency of Worship for any reason. And now we are beholden to him, that, 3. He grants, with some reconciling *salvo's*, that we must not part with our Church-government, under the pretence of parting with indifferent things. But if we must not part with that, we may as well keep all the rest; for our Divisions will be the same. No party ever separated from the Church for the sake of Ceremonies, who did not quarrel with the Order and Authority of Bishops.

The rest of his Arguments in that Chapter do not concern this business; but whatever he would prove by them, there are two general Answers will serve for them all. 1. That indifferent things, which serve the ends of Order & Decency, are not such unnecessary trifles as to be parted with for no reason; which I think I have sufficiently proved above. And 2. That parting with them will not heal our Divisions; and therefore at least upon that account, there is no reason to part with them.

What I have now discours'd about Divisions and Discords, is a sufficient Answer to his next long Harangue about the evil of Schism; in which I heartily concur with him, as believing that Schism it self will shut men

our

out of the Kingdom of Heaven; which is as bad a thing as can be said of it; and therefore out of love to my Brother's Soul, I would not upon any account be guilty of his Schism. But how does this prove that Church-Governours must part with the Rites and Ceremonies of Religion? Oh! because Dissenters take offence at these things, and run into Schism, and consequently must be damned for it; and therefore Charity obliges to part with such indifferent things, to prevent the eternal damnation of so many Souls. But now

1. Suppose the imposition of these Ceremonies be neither the cause of the Schism, nor the removal of them the cure of it, what then? Why must the Church part with these Ceremonies, which are of good use in Religion, to no purpose? And yet this is the truth of the case, as appears from what I have already discours'd. The several Sects of Religion were Schismatics to each other, when there were no Ceremonies to trouble them; and would be so again, if the Church of *England* were once more laid in the dust. No man separates from the Church of *England*, who has not espoused some Principles of Faith or Government (besides the Controversie about Ceremonies) contrary to the Faith and Government of the Church: and will the removal of Ceremonies make them Orthodox in all other points? or are they of such squeamish Consciences, that they can submit to an Antichristian Hierarchy, and an Antichristian Liturgy, but not to Ceremonies? 2. The

2. The Argument of Schism is the very worst Argument our Reconciler could have used, as being directly contrary to the end and designe of it. All the Authority the Church has, depends on the danger of Schism, and the necessity of Christian Communion. The only punishment she can inflict on refractory and disobedient Members, is to cast them out of the Church; and that is a very terrible punishment too, if there be no ordinary means of salvation out of the Communion of the Church: and therefore the danger of Schism is a very good Argument to perswade Dissenters to consider well what they do, and not to engage themselves in a wilful and unnecessary Schism. But it is a pretty odde way, to perswade the Governours of the Church out of the exercise of their just Authority, for fear some men should turn Schismatics, and be damned for it. The reason why the Gospel has threatned such severe punishments against Schism, is to make the Authority of the Church sacred and venerable, that no man should dare to divide the Communion of the Church, or to separate from their Bishops and Pastors, without great and necessary reason; and our Reconciler would fright the Church out of the exercise of her just Authority, for fear men should prove Schismatics, and be damned for it. Christ has made Schism a damning sin, to give Authority to the Church; and our Reconciler would perswade the Church not to exercise her Authority, for fear men should be damned for their Schism.

Now

Now whether our Saviour, who thought it better that Schismatics should be damned, than that there should be no Authority in the Church; or our Reconciler, who thinks it better that there should be no Authority in the Church, than that Schismatics should be damned, are persons of the greatest Charity, I leave others to judge. Indeed the odium of this whole business, which is so tragically exaggerated by the Reconciler, must at last fall upon our Saviour himself, either for instituting such an Authority in his Church, or for confirming this Authority by such a severe Sanction as eternal damnation. If Christ will at the last day condemn those who separate from the Church for some external Rites and Ceremonies (as our Reconciler's Argument supposes he will) then it is a sign that Christ approves of what the Church does, in taking care of the Decency of Worship; and that he thinks it very just that such Schismatics should be damned: and then let our Reconciler, if he think fit, charge the Saviour of the World with want of Charity to the Souls of men. The Church damns no man, but does what she believes to be her duty, and leaves Schismatics to the judgment of Christ: if he damns them at the last day, let our Reconciler plead their Cause then before the proper Tribunal; and if Christ can justify himself in pronouncing the Sentence, I suppose he will justify his Church too in the exercise of her Authority.

This is certain, that if the imposition of these Ceremonies be a just cause of Separation,

our Dissenters are not Schismatics, and therefore in no danger of damnation upon that score: and if it be not a just cause of Separation, then the Church does not exceed her Authority in it; and therefore is not to be blamed, notwithstanding that danger of Schism which men wilfully run themselves into, no more than a Prince is to be blamed for making good Laws, because some men will break them, and be hanged for it.

3. He persuades the Governours of the Church, out of Charity to the Souls of men, not to tempt them to Schism by their Impositions: whereas there is no way to prevent Schism, but by maintaining and asserting their own Authority. When there is no Authority in the Church, there will be as many Schisms in it, as there will be Factions in the State, without some supreme Power to whom all must obey: And therefore out of Charity to the Souls of men, and to prevent their Schism, Church-Governours are bound to exercise their Authority, and not to give way to ignorant and groundless scruples. There is nothing occasions more Schisms, than the different Rites and Modes of Worship; and therefore if they would prevent Schism, they ought to exercise their utmost Authority in maintaining the Decency and Uniformity of Worship; which will prevent more Schisms than it can make. It will preserve unity among those who have any reverence for the Authority of the Church, or any sense of the danger of Schism; and those who have not,

will

will be Schismatics notwithstanding. The only way I know of to prevent Schism, is by wise Instructions, and by a strict Discipline; the one to cure their ignorance and their scruples, the other to curb their wantonness and petulancy: but for Governours to suffer their Authority to be disputed, and to give way to the frowardness, fullness, or ignorance of men, to alter the Laws and Constitutions as often as any man can find any thing to say against them, would breed eternal confusion both in Church and State. Government is the only Cement and Bond of Unity; and when Governours give the Reins out of their hands, every young Phaeton will think himself fit to drive the Chariot of the Sun; and no man will be governed, when there is none to govern: and what Order & Unity there can be in the Church without Government, or what Government where those who are to be governed must give Laws to their Governours, I would desire our Reconciler at his leisure to tell me.

What follows in this Chapter, has already been considered in my first Chapter; and thither I refer my Reader.

CHAP. IV.

An Answer to the Reconciler's Arguments from the Words, the Doctrine, the Deportment of Christ, whilst he was here on Earth, contained in his third Chapter.

THERE are two main Principles on which all our Reconciler's Arguments are founded : 1. That these disputed Ceremonies are wholly useless and unnecessary things. 2. That the imposition of them is the cause of our Divisions and Schisms, which would be cured by the removal of them ; which therefore is so great a charity to the Souls of men, that Church-Governours ought to consent to, and promote such an alteration. Now all this being false, as I have already proved, his other Arguments must fall with it : but yet to avoid all Cavils, I shall particularly consider the force of what he urges. And,

Recon. p. 45.

First, He begins with the Doctrine and Deportment of our Saviour ; which, I confess, is a very good Topick, if he could prove any thing from it : and he has no less than eight Arguments to confound all the stiff Imposers of unnecessary things.

1. That our Lord doth frequently produce that saying of the Prophet Hosea, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice, to justify himself and his Disciples, when for the good of their own bodies, or the*

the souls of others, they did what was forbidden by the Law of Moses, or by the Canons and Traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, who sat in Moses Chair. This is what every body will grant; and therefore he needed not have troubled himself to prove it. And his inference from hence, is this: *That Precepts which P. 46. contain onely Rituals, are to give place to those which do concern the welfare of mens bodies, and much more to those which do respect the welfare of our Brother's soul; so that when both cannot together be observed, we must neglect or violate the former, to observe the latter.* From whence he concludes, that therefore we must part with those Ceremonies, which being made Conditions of Communion, do accidentally afford occasion to such great and fatal evils to the Souls of men. Now does not every body see that there is more in the conclusion, than there is in the premises? For,

1. Does our Saviour here speak of abrogating the Laws of Sacrifice for the sake of Mercy? How does he then hence conclude any thing about repealing the Laws of Ceremonies and Rituals? which neither the Prophet nor our Saviour ever thought on, when they said these words. Though God prefers Mercy before Sacrifice, yet he gave Laws about Sacrifices and Ceremonies, and continued those Laws after these words were spoken; and so may the Church do also, for any thing that is here said to the contrary. For,

2. Our Saviour neither speaks here of making nor repealing Laws about Sacrifices or

Rituals, but onely prefers Mercy before Sacrifice, when there happens a competition between them: he supposes that both may be done, and that both ought to be done; but if both cannot be done at the same time, Mercy must take place of Sacrifice: And this Mercy our Church allows, as much as any man can desire. She is not so severe to exact kneeling at the Sacrament, or at Prayers, or standing at the Creed, If men have any such infirmity on them that they cannot do it without great inconvenience; she does not exact Godfathers or Godmothers, or the signe of the Cross, nor bringing the Child to Church when it is sick and in danger of death; she does not impose fasting on weak and crasse persons, nor think her Laws so sacred that no punctillo must be neglected, when it is done without offence and scandal; she will not blame any for staying from Church, or going out in the midst of Prayers, to quench a fire, or to help a sick person. And this answers to our Saviour's cases, wherein he prefers Mercy before Sacrifice: But how does this prove that the Governours of the Church must not exact obedience to wholsom Constitutions, because some men scruple them? Our Saviour never applies this saying to any such case; and I am sure our Reconciler has neither reason nor authority to do it.

When our Reconciler proves from these words, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, that the Church must part with her Ceremonies for the sake of those who will separate from her

if
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if she do not, he must either argue from the Saying it self, or from those cases to which it is applied by our Saviour. Now this Saying, as it was meant by the Prophet *Hosea*, signifies 6 *Hof. 6.* no more than this; That God preferred all acts of real and substantial goodness, before an external Religion, even before Sacrifice it self; as the Prophet *Micah* expresses it more at large, but to the very same sense: *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oyl? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Now because God prefers true and real goodness before the externals of Religion, does it hence follow that there must be no external Worship? or that the Church must make no Laws for the decent or orderly performance of it? or must repeal these Laws when any ignorant people refuse to submit to them? Just as much as that God did not require them to offer Sacrifice, because he preferred Mercy before it.

6 *Mic. 6, 7, 8.*

Our Reconciler observes two Cases to which our Saviour applies this saying: 1. To justify his Disciples, who pulled the ears of Corn as they walked through the fields, and rubbed them in their hands and eat them, on the

12 *Mat. 7.*

A Vindication of the Rights

Sabbath-day; which the Pharisees expounded to be a breach of the Sabbatick rest, as being a servile work; and our Saviour does not dispute with them upon that point, but justifies what they did by their present necessity, and by this Rule, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* That God, who prefers acts of Kindness and Mercy before Sacrifice, when they come in competition with each other, is not such a rigorous exacter of obedience to any positive Institutions, as to allow no Indulgence to necessity it self: and it becomes Church-Governours to imitate the goodness of God in this; and our Church does so, as I have already observed: but how this proves that the Church must make no Laws about Ceremonies, or repeal them, if men won't obey them, I do not understand.

9 Mat. 13.

The next instance is our Saviour's justifying himself against the accusations of the Pharisees for his eating and drinking with Publicans and Sinners; which, he tells them, was onely in order to reform them, as a Physician converses with the sick: and certainly it was lawful to converse with them upon so charitable a designe, since God preferred Mercy before Sacrifice; and therefore certainly God will be better pleased with our conversing with Sinners, in order to make them good men, than with our abstaining from their company, though a familiar conversation with them upon other accounts be scandalous. And how this proves what our Reconciler would conclude from it, I cannot see.

Well,



Well, but this is a general Rule, which may be applied to more cases than one or two. Right? But if we will argue from our Saviour's authority and application, we must apply it onely to such cases as are parallel to those cases to which our Saviour applies it; otherwise we must not pretend the authority of our Saviour, but the reason of the thing: and let him set aside our Saviour's authority, and we shall deal well enough with his Reason. All that can be made of this Rule, is this: That where there happens any such case, that there is a temporary competition between two Duties, which are both acknowledged to be our duty, there the greatest and most necessary duty must take place; and particularly, that all Rituals must give place to Mercy. So that to make this a parallel case, our Reconciler must grant that it is the duty of Church-Governours to prescribe Rules for the external Decency and Solemnity of Worship. What is the other Duty then to which this must give way? To the care of mens Souls, says our Reconciler. No, say I, there is no inconsistency between the care of mens Souls, and the care of publick Worship, which is the best way of taking care of mens Souls; and therefore there can never be a competition between these two. O but some men are ignorant, and scrupulous, and wilful; and if you prescribe any Rules of Worship, they will dissent from them, and turn Schismatics, and be damned: and thus *accidentally* it affords occasion to these great and fatal evils. Let him prove then, if he can, from these

these words of our Saviour, that the Governors of the Church must never do their duty, for fear those men should be damned who will not do theirs. Such cases as these, if they be truly pitiable, must be left to the mercy of God; but the Church can take no cognizance of them, especially when this cannot be done without destroying the publick Decency and Solemnities of Worship, and renouncing her own just Authority, the maintaining of which is more for the general good of Souls, than her compliance with some scrupulous persons would be.

I shall onely farther observe his great civility to the Church and Kingdom of which he is a Member. For his third Observation from these words is, *That they were used by the Prophet upon the occasion of the strictness of the Israelites in the observance and the requiring these Rituals, whilst charity and mercy to their Brother was banished from their hearts, there being no truth, no mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; but killing, committing adultery, stealing, lying, and swearing falsely, &c.* Now certainly it was no fault in the Jews, at that time, to be zealous for the external Worship instituted by the Law of Moses, (though our Reconciler seems to insinuate that it was; for he matters not how he reproaches the Institutions of God himself, so he can but reflect some odium on the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church:) yet they betrayed their Hypocrisy, by their Zeal for the Externals of Religion, while they neglected the weightier matters of the Law.

And

And lest any man should be so dull as not to understand the meaning of this Observation, he rhetorically introduces it with a *God forbid*! *Now God forbid that I should say, that it is thus in England*; but he is pleased to put men in mind of it, if they please to think so. This is true Fanatick Cant and Charity. There must be no Rules prescribed for the Worship of God, the Church must not take care to reclaim or restrain Schismatics, because our Reconciler thinks the State does not take sufficient care to punish other Vices. Certainly there never was any Age of the Church wherein the publick Ministers of Religion took more care to decry this Pharisaical Hypocrisie of an external Religion, and to teach men that nothing will recommend them to God without the practice of an universal Righteousness, than at this day; who will not flatter the greatest men in their Vices, nor think any man a Saint, because he expresses a great Zeal for the Church, when his life and actions proclaim him to be a Devil. We leave this, good Reconciler, to your beloved tender-conscienced Dissenters, who can strain at a Gnat, and swallow a Camel; who cannot see a Surplice without horror, but can dispence with Lying and Perjury, with Slanders and Revilings, and speaking evil of Dignities; with Treasons, and Murders of Princes; and hug the most profligate Villains in their bosom, and palliate and excuse all their Vices, if they will but espouse their Interest and Quarrel. These are the men who have weak-

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ned the Churches Authority, and exposed her Censures to contempt, and then reproach her for not using her Authority to correct the Vices of the Age. The Debauchees of our days learn to despise the Censures of the Church, by the Example of Dissenters; and when they cannot shelter their Vices in our Communion, they take Sanctuary in a Conventicle.

P. 47.

II. His next Argument against the imposition of Ceremonies upon Dissenters, is from the kindness and indulgence of our Saviour to his Disciples while he was with them; *That he would not impose such a burden as fasting on them, because they were infirm and weak, and therefore might be prejudiced by it; that like old Bottles filled with new Wine, they might be apt to burst, that is, by these severities imposed on them; they might be discouraged, and fall from him, and so might perish.*

9 Mat. 14, &c.

I confess, I have often been troubled what to make of this place; not that I ever suspected such inferences from it, as our Reconciler has discovered; but these words being generally expounded by ancient and modern Writers, of Christ's indulgence to the weakness of his Disciples, I could never understand what this weakness should be, which made them less able to fast than the Disciples of *John*, or of the Pharisees. It could not be weakness of body; for they were men of mean fortunes, who had been used to more hardship than most of the Pharisees: and what weakness of mind could they labour under, which should

should make fasting so grievous a burden? They were Jews, who were to observe the public Fasts of their Law, and therefore fasting was no new thing to them: and why should they be compared to old Cloth and old Bottles, and fasting to new Cloth and new Wine? These are difficulties which I cannot answer, and shall be thankful to our Reconciler if he can. And therefore I am apt to suspect it is all a mistake, from a misapplication of those comparisons which our Saviour brought to illustrate that Answer which he had given to the Question of John's Disciples.

They ask'd him, *Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy Disciples fast not?* And Jesus said unto them, *Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.* Christ is the Bridegroom, the Church his Spouse, the Apostles the Children of the Bride-chamber, who immediately attended his Person in his greatest privacies and retirements. The appearance of Christ on Earth was a time of as great joy to all that knew him, as the presence of the Bridegroom; and as it would be very indecent and improper for those who attend the Bridegroom, to be sorrowful and pensive, so would it be for his Disciples to mourn and fast (which is an expression of mourning and sorrow) while he was present. All this refers not to the weakness of his Disciples, but the unsuitness of the season to fast. Now the Question is, Whether

Whether in what follows, our Saviour onely illustrates this Answer, or gives a new one. And I confels, it seems most probable to me, that our Saviour onely confirms and illustrates the same answer; which he does by two comparisons, the first to shew the indecency of the thing, the second, the impossibility of it.

The first is this: *No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment: for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.* At Weddings and Festival Entertainments, they used to put on new Cloths; at fasting, to wear any old tattered Garments. Now, says our Saviour, mourning and fasting in the presence of the Bridegroom, which is a time of joy, is as indecent, as it would be to patch up a Garment of wedding and fasting Cloth, of new and old. For the new Cloth is so far from adding to the beauty of the old Garment, that the rent is made worse, more notorious and visible, and exposed to the view and scorn of all men; and so indecent would it be for the Children of the Bride-chamber to fast, as for men to go to a Wedding in such a patcht Garment.

The second comparison shews the impossibility of the thing, that they should fast while the Bridegroom is with them. To fast without mourning, is an hypocritical Fast; it is better not to fast at all, than thus to mock God; and yet it is impossible they should mourn whose minds are transported with such new and fermenting joys at the presence of the Bride-

Bridegroom. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. Wine is proper at Festival Entertainments, and very aptly signifies the joy and exultancy of the mind: for Wine maketh the heart glad; and new Wine signifies some new and present transports of joy, which boil and ferment in the breast, as new Wine does upon the Lees; and therefore aptly signifies such a joy as is in the presence of the Bridegroom. Old Bottles may signify a mournful sorrowful mind, which is as weak and dejected with grief, as men usually are with age. Now as new Wine, when it ferments, will burst old Bottles that are weak and crasse, so such transports of joy as are occasioned by the presence of the Bridegroom, will dispel all sorrow from our minds, and run out in all expressions of inward satisfaction, and therefore will spoil our mourning and fasting. This is the account why the Disciples could not fast while Christ was with them, but when he should be taken from them, then they should fast. If this be the true interpretation of the place, as the very aptness of the application persuades me it is, then our Reconciler is at a loss: for here is not one word of indulging the weakness of his Disciples; and it seems very strange to me, that any man should think that by old Bottles our Saviour should represent the weakness of his Disciples, and forbear putting new Wine into them, imposing the severe discipline

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of fasting upon them, for fear of breaking these old Bottles; when no man yet ever refused to put new Wine into old Bottles, for fear of breaking the Bottle, but for fear of losing the Wine: which makes the application very absurd.

But yet let us suppose that our Saviour, out of condescension to the weakness of his Disciples, did not impose fasting on them, what follows hence? Why it plainly follows, that the Governours of the Church must not impose any Rites and Ceremonies of Worship, *things much inferiour to this duty of fasting, upon Dissenters, when they do tend to the ruine and disadvantage of so many Souls as are made Schismaticke upon this account.* Let us then briefly consider what likeness or affinity there is between these two cases.

1. The Fasts of which the Dispute is here, are private and voluntary Fasts, such as men imposed upon themselves, or observed in imitation of their Sect and Party, or in obedience to the directions of their several Masters: Christ imposed no such Fasts upon his Disciples; therefore the Governours of the Church must not prescribe the Rites and Ceremonies of publick Worship, though in such matters Christ conformed himself, and taught his Disciples to conform to the Rules and Orders of their Synagogues, which were all as much of humane institution as our Ceremonies are; which is an admirable way of arguing. The observing or not observing private and voluntary Fasts, though it might offend some
super-

superstitious Pharisees, was no affront to publick Authority, nor made any alteration or confusion in publick Worship; and therefore was not of that consequence, whatever our Reconciler thinks, as dissenting from publick Constitutions. This Christ never indulged his Disciples in; nor has the Church any reason to do it:

2. This Indulgence was but temporary, during our Saviour's abode with them on Earth; but he tells them, when he should be taken from them, then they should fast. And the ancient Writers look upon this saying to be a kind of Institution of the Quadrigesimal Fast; and will our Reconciler argue from a short Indulgence for a year or two, granted to the Disciples by Christ, to prove a perpetual Indulgence to the end of the World, to be granted to Dissenters? For if his Arguments are good, they will last for ever. Christ did not intend that his Disciples should be always Children; nor has he imposed upon his Church to indulge such childish weakness and fancies for ever.

3. Fasting was a very severe duty, very afflictive both to mind and body; and therefore there might be some reason for our Saviour to forbear commanding it for some time: But what severity is there in the Ceremonies of our Church? What mighty trouble is it to kneel at the Sacrament? What offence is a white Linnen garment to the eye? What disturbance does the signe of the Cross, made with the gentle motion of the finger, cause?

But though these Ceremonies are not grie-

vous in themselves, yet they are burdensom to the Conscience. Let him shew then that our Saviour had any regard in this to a doubtful or scrupulous Conscience; and I will grant it a good proof. How could any Jew scruple the lawfulness of fasting, which was so often commanded and recommended in their Law? I am sure all the ancient Writers take notice onely of the severity of the Duty, not of its burdensomeness to the Conscience, as the reason of our Saviour's Indulgence.

P. 48.

Well; but he tells us, that *Theophylact* and *St. Chrysostom* say, That herein *Christ* gave them a Rule, that when they should convert the World, they also should condescend and behave themselves towards them with the greatest meekness. Whether *Christ* intended this or not, in what he now said, to be sure it is a good Rule; and that which the Apostles carefully observed; they indulged the believing Jews in the observation of the Mosaicall Law, and bore with many weaknesses and infirmities both in Jews and Gentiles: But did this meekness extend to suffer every man to worship God as he pleased? Did they prescribe no Rules, or Orders, or Ceremonies of Worship? Or did they prescribe such Rules, without exacting obedience to them? Did they suffer any Christians to dispute their Authority in such cases? And was it thought an act of meekness and gentleness to do so? It is strange then that it should never be thought so in after-Ages, wherein the Church exercised an absolute and uncontrollable Power in all such matters, and

and no Christian ever pretended to dispute their Authority.

But the Prophet *Isaiah* describes our Saviour as one *who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, and who will gather his lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* Well, we readily grant that our Saviour was the most kind and gentle Master that ever was; but does this signify that he would give no Laws about Worship? Or that if any person scrupled these Laws, he would not insist upon it, but give them their liberty to worship God as they pleased? If Christ was a kind and merciful Lord without this, his Ministers also may exercise great lenity and gentleness, without prostituting their Authority, or the Worship of God, to the ignorance, or giddiness, or frowardness of Professors.

Christ gave very easie and gentle Laws, instructed his Hearers with great mildness and calmness, bore their dulness and infidelity, their indignities and affronts, with admirable patience; convers'd even with Publicans and Sinners, to gain them to repentance; encouraged the least beginnings, and cherish'd the first and weak Essays of Faith: but if they would be his Disciples, he expected they should submit to his Authority and Laws, and still expects that they should submit to that Authority he has plac'd in his Church. And if Church-Governours use this mildness and gentleness in their Laws, and in their behaviour; though they assert their own Authority,

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and exact obedience to their Laws, they need not fear the censure of the Shepherds of Israel, which our Reconciler so charitably threatens them with. *The diseased have you not strengthened, neither have you healed that which was sick, neither have you bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have you sought that which was lost.*

P. 30.

III. His next Argument is a wonderful one : *That Christ took compassion on the Jews, as Sheep without a Shepherd; that he went about preaching himself; that he sent his Disciples to preach; that he commands his Disciples to pray, that God would send forth more Labourers into his Harvest : The Query then is, Whether they do conform to this Example, or the matter of this Prayer, who do exclude so many Servants of the Lord from labouring in his Harvest for a thing indifferent. Truly I think they may, though they excluded the Reconciler into the bargain : for, thanks be to God, it is not now with us, as it was in our Saviour's days, at the first preaching of the Gospel. God has now sent out numerous Labourers into his Vineyard, men of Learning, Piety, and Diligence; more indeed than there is entertainment or employment for. And the Christian Church, notwithstanding this Prayer of our Saviour, never scrupled casting Schismatical Presbyters out of Christ's Vineyard. But has our Reconciler the face to say that they are shut out merely for indifferent things, when they themselves give another account of it? Renouncing*

cing of the Covenant kept them out a great while; Reordination, Episcopal Government, a National Church, Liturgies, &c. and are all these indifferent things? But the dissenting Preachers are not so much beholding to him, but the present Clergy are as little, to whom he has by very broad hints and intimations applied Theophylact's observation upon the Text: *That our Lord complained the Labourers were but few, because the Scribes and Pharisees, the present Labourers, not onely did not profit, but did hurt the people, whereas it is the property of a good Pastor to be merciful towards them.* He knew very well this Objection of the paucity of Labourers, could not well be applied to us, who have such a numerous Clergy; and therefore to make room for Dissenters, he fairly insinuates, that the present Ministers do no good, but hurt. Such an impudent Calumny as needs no confutation! and let others consider what censure it deserves.

IV. His next Argument is taken from our P. 51. Saviour's command, not to scandalize or despise little ones, 18 *Mat.* where by *little ones*, he understands those who are weak in the Faith, or not well instructed in their Duty, or mistaken in it, though very obstinate and peremptory in their mistake: for so he must mean, if he will apply it to the case of Dissenters. And by scandalizing, offending, or despising them, he understands doing any action which occasions their ruine. And thus he thinks Church-Governours fall under this Woe, which is denounced against those who

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offend these little ones, when they impose such Ceremonies which they cannot and will not submit to; which occasions the Schism, and consequently the damnation of their weak Brother. No man can possibly want Arguments, who has such an admirable faculty, not at finding, but making them: for nothing can be more remote from our Saviour's intention in these words, than such an inference as this. For,

I. It is evident, that by *little ones* our Saviour understands those who are meek, and humble, and modest; who are as void of pride, and passion, and earthly ambitions, as a little Child; as is evident both from the occasion of this discourse, which was to correct the ambition of his Disciples, and from the example of a little Child, which he proposes to them for their imitation. Thus St. *Chrysostom* and St. *Jerom* expound the words, though the latter observes also, that those who are scandalized, are upon that account also little ones: for great and strong Christians will not receive scandal. That is, though they be humble and modest, &c. yet these Graces and Vertues are not so well rooted and confirmed in them, but that the ill usage they meet with from the world, may turn them out of their byass, and occasion their fall. But what is this to our Dissenters, who are neither in one sense nor other, little ones; who neither have the modesty, humility, and peaceableness of Children, nor their soft and ductile nature; but are stiff, and inflexible, and obstinate in their conceits,

ceits, that they will neither hearken to Reason, nor yield to Conviction ?

2. * To scandalize or offend these little ones, St. *Chrysostom* tells us, is to dishonour, to reproach, to vilifie them, to despise them, as it is expressed 2. 10. which, as he observes, is a great temptation and scandal to men of weak minds. Our Reconciler observes, that St. *Jerom* says, We are said to scandalize, when by our actions we give occasion to their ruine. I find no such saying in St. *Jerom* upon the place; but however, the saying is a very good one, if we apply it right, to actions of contempt and scorn, of which both St. *Jerom* and St. *Chrysostom* speak; which are apt to spoil this good temper of mind, when men see themselves onely scorned and derided for it, and exposed to all sorts of violence and injury. This is the usual reward of great modesty and humility in this World; and therefore our Saviour secures these little ones from contempt, by denouncing severe woes against those who offer it.

But what is all this to the Church, which offers no contempt to the meanest Christian, much less to men of humble, and modest, and peaceable tempers? She is as much concerned for the salvation of the Poor as of the Rich, and despises no man who has a soul to be saved, and will submit to wise instructions. Must the Church be charged with scandalizing little ones, because she will not renounce her own Authority, nor suffer these little ones to give Laws to her? Certainly our Saviour

* Ἀποσχοῖν
(τὸν γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ
σκανδαλίζω)
Chrys. in lo-
cum, &
σκανδαλὸν τὸ
ὄνειδος καὶ ἔλεος.

v; 15, 16, 17,
18.

never intended any such thing, when in this very Chapter, and upon this very occasion, he asserts the Authority of the Church even in the point of scandal, and commands us not to converse with those men, who will not hearken to her Counsels and Reproofs. *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, (shall offend and scandalize thee) go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of one or two witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. But of the case of scandal or giving offence, our Reconciler has given us occasion to discourse more in another place.*

23 Mat. 13.

V. His next Argument is as wise as the rest. He tells us, *Our Lord denounceth woe against the Scribes and Pharisees, because they shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men.* But he should have added the whole verse: *for ye neither go in your selves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.* St. Jerom expounds this two ways. 1. They shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, by hindring their belief in Christ, in whom they would neither believe themselves, nor suffer others to believe, who were prepared and disposed for it: which is certainly

tainly the true exposition of the words. But then he adds, 2. That these Teachers and Rabbies may be said to shut up the Kingdom of Heaven, who scandalize their Disciples with their wicked lives, that is, who tempt them to sin by their example. But what is this to the Dispute about Ceremonies? Does the imposition of Ceremonies, in its own nature, shut men out of the Kingdom of Heaven? Can none be saved then, who obey the Laws of the Church about Rituals and Ceremonies, as no man could enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, who followed the directions of the Scribes and Pharisees? Christ condemns the Pharisees for using their utmost endeavour to hinder men from embracing the Christian Faith, and entering into the Kingdom of Heaven: Our Reconciler draws up the same charge against the Church, because some men take unjust offence against the Order and Decency of her Worship, and will not enter, though she uses all manner of Entreaties, and Arguments, and wise Arts, to persuade them to enter. This is just as if we should charge that good Father who received his prodigal Son with all expressions of joy, and made a great entertainment for his return, with shutting his eldest Son out of his house, because he foolishly and wickedly took offence at his Fathers kindness to his Brother, and would not enter; though his Father himself went out to persuade him, and invite him in, and to satisfy him of the fitness and decency of what he had done. I doubt this does more properly belong to those

those Pharisaical Preachers who are satisfied in the lawfulness of what is required, (as St. *Jerom* supposes some of these Pharisees were convinc'd that Jesus was the *Messias*); but to gratifie their own obstinacy, pride, and revenge, will neither do what they know they may lawfully do themselves, nor suffer others to do it. St. *Chrysostom* expounds the words much to the same purpose; and therefore no wonder if (as our Reconciler observes) he tells us, *That these men are called Pests, and are diametrically opposed to Teachers, their work being to destroy.* For if the Teachers business be to save what is lost, to lose or cause to perish what might be saved, is the work of the destroyer: *τὸ σωζόμενον μὴ ἀπολέσθαι*, that which otherwise would be saved; the *τὸν εἰσέρχοντα*, those who were entering, that is, as he expounds it, the *ἐκτεταμένους*, those who were prepared and disposed to enter. Now, I think, our Church never shut any out of her Communion, who were prepared and disposed to enter.

v. 4.

P. 54.

But our Reconciler observes, that in the same Chapter our Saviour condemns the Scribes and Pharisees for binding heavy burdens upon mens shoulders, which they would not move with one of their fingers. But what were these heavy burdens and grievous to be born, which the Pharisees bound upon mens shoulders? were they things burdensom to the Conscience, which tempted men to forsake their Communion? No such matter, men were not so scrupulous in those days; and our Saviour in that very place expressly charges his own Disciples not

not to forsake their Communion: *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses seat; all therefore y. 2, 3. that they bid you observe, that observe and do.* And therefore our Saviour could not charge them, that by these heavy burdens they frightened men from their Communion, and made Schisms in the Church; and therefore it is very impertinently alledged by our Reconciler. These heavy burdens did not concern the Rites and Ceremonies of publick Worship, which our Saviour never blamed them for, but conformed to them himself when he worshipped in their Synagogues. But they were some strict and rigorous Expositions of their Law, without making such allowances in cases of necessity and mercy, as God intended; as when they quarrelled with the Disciples for pulling the ears of Corn and eating them as they walked through the fields on the Sabbath-day, being hungry; or some arbitrary impositions which made a great shew and appearance of Sanctity, but were very troublesome to be observed. And when our Reconciler can shew any such heavy burdens imposed by the Church of *England*, we will think of some other Answer.

But did our Saviour condemn the Pharisees merely for binding these heavy burdens, and laying them upon mens shoulders? Not that neither. The crime our Saviour charges them with, was gross Hypocrisie; that while they were so strict and severe in their impositions upon other men, they were very easie and gentle to themselves: They laid heavy burdens

dens on others, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. Our Reconciler observes; That St. Chrysostom well notes, that our Lord saith not that they cannot, but they will not move them. Whereby he would have his Readers to understand, that by moving them, our Saviour meant removing them; that they laid on heavy burdens, but would not take them off again when they lawfully might; as he expressly says, *That not dispensing with these Traditions upon such great occasions, was the sin of the Scribes and Pharisees.* Which is the fault he charges our Church with, that she will not part with her Ceremonies for the sake of Dissenters: Whereas St. Jerom and St. Chrysostom, and all good Expositors, understand no more by it, than that they would not practise the least part of these things themselves: They were very severe in their injunctions to others, but excused themselves from such severities; Which, saith S. Chrysostom, is quite contrary to what becomes a good Governour, who will be very rigorous and severe in judging and censuring his own actions, but a very kind and favourable judge of those who are under his care. And therefore our Saviour urges this as a proof of what he before charged them with; *But do not ye after their works, for they say and do not.*

P. 56.

p Mark 38.

VI. In the next place he attempts to prove, *That Dissenters, though not of our Communion, should not be forbid to preach for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom;* because Christ would not suffer his Disciples to forbid the man who wrought

wrought Miracles in his Name, but did not follow them; that is, says our Reconciler, *did not hold Communion with them.* And thus he has fairly altered the state of the Question, and unwarily betrayed the secret thoughts of his heart. His open and avowed designe all this while has been, to plead for the removal of our Ceremonies; that Dissenters might joy in Communion with us, and avoid the guilt of Schism, which is a damning sin; but now it seems it would do as well, if not much better, if Dissenters had but their liberty to preach in Conventicles for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom. But is the Kingdom of Christ then promoted by Schism? Will Schism damn men, (as he asserts, and makes the principal foundation of all his Arguments) and will the damnation of so many men as are seduced into Schism, enlarge Christ's Kingdom? Must the Church part with her Ceremonies, for fear the occasion mens running into Schism, and being damned for it? And yet may she suffer Schismatics to preach, and allure men into a Schism? I beg our Reconciler to think again of this, and reconcile himself to himself.

But how does it appear that this man who cast out Devils in Christ's Name, did preach the Gospel too? There is no such thing said in the Text; and if it be true what our Reconciler affirms, that he was not Christ's Disciple, he could not do it. If he believed in Christ, he was Christ's Disciple; if he did not, he could not preach the Gospel: and I think

think there is some difference between preaching and working Miracles. When our Disfenters can work Miracles, I will never oppose their preaching.

But how does it appear that this man who cast out Devils in Christ's Name, was no Disciple? Had Christ no Disciples but those who followed him where-ever he went? Our Saviour seems to prove, that he was a Disciple, or in a very good disposition to be one, in that saying, *He that is not against us, is on our part.* And if he were not a Disciple, his very working Miracles in Christ's Name, was a very likely way to make him and others also the Disciples of Christ; and therefore, might be permitted by our Lord for that very reason: *Forbid him not, for there is no man, which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*

But was not our Reconciler asleep, when he tells us, that this man did not hold Communion with the Disciples? What Communion then was he of? Was he not a Jew, and a Member of the Jewish Church? And was he not then in Communion with Christ and his Apostles? For did not Christ, all the time he was on Earth, live in Communion with the Jewish Church? Did he set up any distinct Church and Communion of his own? But I perceive our Reconciler is of Mr. Baxter's mind, that *Church-Communion is a presential Communion*: And because he did not always follow Christ, and give his personal attendance on him, therefore he could not hold Communion

nion with him. And now let our Reconciler try again how from this Example he can prove that Schismatics must be suffered to preach for the promotion of Christ's Kingdom.

VII. And yet it is wonderful to observe how he turns the Tables in his next Argument; and proves, from Christ's being the good Shepherd, who lays down his life for his Sheep, that the Governours of the Church should part with their indifferent things, to preserve the Sheep from *such Thieves*, that is, Schismatical Preachers, those who, if his last Argument be good, ought not to be forbid to preach, though they do not profess Communion with us. But I must tell him, That for the Church to destroy her Constitution, to pull down all her Hedges and Fences, is the way to let in these Thieves, as he calls them, not to keep them out.

VIII. His last Argument is of the same nature: That because *Christ prays for the unity of the Church, therefore to procure this unity and concord, we must part with all unnecessary things, which do not in the least advance his Kingdom.* And truly I think so too: but if the external Decency of Worship is not so unnecessary a thing, nor easily to be parted with; if parting with these Ceremonies will not heal our Schisms and Divisions, of which I have discours'd largely already, there needs no other Answer to be returned to this Argument.

He concludes this Chapter with retorting some of these Arguments upon the Dissenters. I have answered for the Church, let the Dissenters

senters now try how they can answer for themselves; for he very truly observes, that *they fall with more weight upon them.* To prefer some arbitrary Platforms of Worship and Discipline which God has nowhere instituted or commanded, before the substantial Duties of Peace and Unity, and Obedience to Government, looks more like an offence against that Law, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice,* than what he charges upon the Church; and to forbid the observation of the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship as unlawful and superstitious, is a much more intolerable yoke and burden than the imposition of them. But I shall leave the Dissenters and our Reconcilers to adjust this matter among themselves.

CHAP. V.

Containing an Answer to our Reconciler's Arguments drawn from the 14th and 15th Chapters to the Romans.

THough our *Reconciler* makes a great flourish with a multitude of Arguments, as usually those men do, who cannot find one good one; yet he seems to put the greatest confidence in those Arguments which are drawn from that condescension and mutual forbearance, which *St. Paul* requires the Jewish and Gentile Converts (who differed about the observation of the Mosaical Law) to exercise towards each other. And this, I confess, were a very good Argument, if it were a parallel Case. But I suppose our *Reconciler* will grant, that there are some cases, wherein it is very reasonable to exercise such forbearance; and yet there may be other cases, wherein it is not prudent and reasonable to allow the same Indulgence: and therefore it does not follow, that because *St. Paul* required the Jewish and Gentile Christians to forbear each other in their Disputes about the Mosaical Law, therefore the Governours of the Church must forbear Dissenters, and not prescribe the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship, nor exact Conformity to them; unless it appear that these two cases are the same, or so like to

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each other, that we may fairly argue from one to the other. That these cases are not alike, and that the Apostle's Arguments for mutual forbearance are not applicable to the case of our Dissenters, I doubt not but I shall make so plain, as to satisfy all impartial Readers. And this, I hope, may pass for an Answer to his fourth Chapter.

I. Then I observe, that *St. Paul* in the 14th Chapter to the *Romans*, only exhorts the Jewish and Gentile Christians to mutual forbearance in such cases which had been already decreed and determined by the highest Authority in the Church. There is a great Dispute between our *Reconciler* and *Dr. Womaok*, now the Reverend Bishop of *St. Davids*, to whom this Epistle was directed, Whether only to the private Christians at *Rome*, or to Church-Governours also, and consequently whether it be the duty only of private Christians, or of Church-Governours also, to exercise this forbearance towards Dissenters. The Bishop supposes, that there was no Presbytery settled at *Rome* at this time, and offers several Arguments to prove it. Our *Reconciler* attempts to answer these Arguments, and to prove the contrary, that the Church of *Rome*, whose Faith was spoken of throughout the World, could not be without a settled Ministry at that time. I am not willing to interpose in this Dispute: for though it would be of great moment to answer all our *Reconciler's* Arguments from this Chapter, were it certain that *St. Paul* did not design these directions for Church-Gover-

Governours, but onely for private Christians, as an Expedient to preserve Peace and Unity till these Disputes should be determined by a just Authority; yet whatever fair probabilities there may be of this, I doubt there is not evidence enough for it to convince a Reconciler, or an obstinate Dissenter.

And indeed, upon the principle which I have now laid down, there is no need of this: for whether these Exhortations to forbear one another, and to receive one another, and not to judge, condemn, or despise one another, concern private Christians, or Church-Governours, or equally both, yet since this forbearance extends onely to such cases as were determined by Ecclesiastical Authority to be the proper matter for the exercise of this Christian charity and forbearance, every one sees how impertinently it is alleadged by our Reconciler to prove that the Governours of the Church must not impose any indifferent Customs and Usages which are scrupled by our Dissenters. For what consequence is there in this? that because private Christians or Church-Governours must allow the free exercise of that liberty to each other, which the Church has decreed that they should allow to each other, therefore the Church it self must not impose the observance of any indifferent Ceremonies on Dissenters, or must alter or abate them in compliance with their Scruples.

This is the plain case here. The Council at Jerusalem had decreed, that the Gentiles who received the Faith of Christ, should not

15 Acts.

be under a necessity of being circumcised, or observing the Law of *Moses*, and left the believing Jews at their liberty to observe the Rites and Ceremonies of their Law still; but notwithstanding this determination, the believing Gentiles, who understood their Christian liberty, despised the weakness and superstition of the believing Jews, who continued zealous for the Law of *Moses*; and the believing Jews were mightily scandalized and offended at the liberty which the Gentile Converts took, and made great scruple of conversing with them, or of worshipping God together. This Scandal and Offence which the Council easily foresaw would be taken and given on both sides, did not hinder them from making a peremptory Decree in this matter, as I observed before; and when such Scandals as these did arise between the believing Jews and Gentiles in the Church of *Rome*, *St. Paul* in this Epistle earnestly exhorts them to mutual charity and forbearance, to grant that liberty to each other, without mutual censures, contempt, and scandal, which the Church had already decreed should be granted: for he pleads for no other forbearance than what was expressly decreed by the Council at *Jerusalem*.

In such cases wherein the Church allows a latitude, and permits different apprehensions and practices, certainly it becomes all Christians not to judge or censure, offend or scandalize each other; which is the only case the Apostle mentions. But will any man in his
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wits, hence infer that the Church must make no Laws, nor prescribe any Rules of Worship which are scrupled by private Christians; and that if she do, she sins against these Laws of Charity and Forbearance, which the Apostle exhorts the *Romans* to observe?

The Governours of the Church may exercise the same authority which the Apostles did in the Council at *Jerusalem*; they may determine what upon mature deliberation and advice they judge fit or necessary to be determined; whatever scruples some Christians have entertained about it; and when they have done so, it becomes Christian Bishops and Ministers; as the Apostle here does, to persuade private Christians to obey such Constitutions, for the preservation of the Peace and Unity of the Church; not to turn Reconcilers, and to plead the Cause of Dissenters against Church-Authority, which *St. Paul* never did.

And it becomes private Christians to submit to such Determinations; and those who do not, are guilty of the scandal and offence, if there be any, not those who do. The Gentile Converts were guilty of scandal, if they despised the Jews for observing the Law of *Moses*, which the Council had still permitted them to observe; the Jews were guilty of scandalizing the Gentiles, if they judged and censured them, and denied Communion to them for not observing the Law of *Moses*, because the Council had delivered the Gentiles from any such necessity: but no man can be guilty of any criminal scandal by obeying the

lawful Constitutions of the Church, whoever is scandalized at it, but scandal always lies on the side of disobedience. The Christian Jew gave no offence by observing the Law of *Moses*, nor the Christian Gentile by not observing it, because they both herein had the authority of the Apostolical Decree to justify them; and therefore *St. Paul* does not exhort the Jews not to observe the Law of *Moses*, nor the Gentiles to observe it, to avoid scandal, (which had been somewhat like our *Reconciler's* Address to the Church not to impose, and to the Dissenters to obey such impositions to avoid Schism;) but he exhorts them both to grant that liberty to each other which the Church had granted, and not to judge, and censure, and despise, and separate from each other for the use of this liberty, which in both of them would be an express violation of the Apostolical Decree.

Governours indeed may be guilty of uncharitableness in the exercise of a just Authority, (as I have already discours'd, and vindicated our Church from any such imputation) but Subjects can never be guilty of scandal in obeying the lawful commands of a lawful Authority. And private Christians may be guilty of scandal in the imprudent use of their just liberties; but this can never extend to the authority of Government. Thus it was with the Gentile Converts. The Council at *Jerusalem* had delivered them from the necessity of observing the Laws of *Moses*, but yet had not laid a necessity on them to eat Swines flesh, or any

any other meats which were unclean by the Law, when a Jew was present; and therefore herein it became them to use their liberty without offence, and to exercise a generous charity towards the weakness of a believing Jew in such cases, as the Apostle argues from the 13th verse to the end of the Chapter; and yet it became the Church to allow this liberty to the Gentiles, which they might use unchangeably: for to have abridged it, had been to impose on them the observation of the Mosaic Law.

The Apostle indeed; as the Reconciler observes, did plainly assert, *That the things scrupled by the weak, were pure and lawful in themselves; that he knew and was persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there was nothing unclean of it self:* which is the very determination of the Council at Jerusalem; and yet he requires the believing Gentiles to exercise great charity in the use of their liberty; which is a plain instance of the exercise of a private charity in such cases, where publick Authority can make no such determination in favour of the scrupulous. The Council at Jerusalem, and St. Paul in this Epistle, determine against the scruples of the Jews, and assert the liberty of the Gentiles; and they could not do otherwise; and yet St. Paul requires private Christians to use this liberty without offence, and to exercise such charity to their Jewish Brethren, as the Church it self did not, and could not exercise. And thus St. Paul falls under our Reconciler's last, as well as Dr. Womack, *As if*

Church-Governours were not as much concerned in the reasons laid down, as were the common People; that is, that they were not obliged to receive the weak in Faith, and being strong, to bear the infirmities of the weak; that they might judge another mans servant, that they might put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in their Brothers way; that they might walk uncharitably, might grieve, and even destroy him with their meat for whom Christ died; that they might let their good be evil spoken of, and might for meat destroy the work of God; and that though it is good for private persons not to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor to do any thing whereby their Brother stumbleth, or is made weak, or is offended, yet may Church-Governours impose such things, although God has declared that their power is only for edification, and not for destruction. For this is the plain case, all these Arguments St. Paul uses to perswade private Christians to mutual forbearance and charity in the exercise of their Christian liberty; and yet both the Council at Jerusalem, and St. Paul in this Chapter, do positively determine, that the Gentile Christians should have this liberty, though St. Paul perswades them to great charity in the exercise of it. So that the case of private Christians and publick Governours is so very different, that charity may exact that from private Christians to avoid scandal and offence, which no charity can justify in Governours: the Gentile Converts were to deny themselves in the use of their liberty, to avoid giving offence to the Jewish Christians; but a whole Council of Apostles did not think fit to deny this liberty to the Gentiles, which might prove

an offence and scandal to the Jews. For the believing Gentiles might restrain the use of their liberty without injuring their Christian liberty; for no man is bound to use all the liberty he has, and therefore may suspend the use of it when it will serve the ends of charity: but the Apostles could not deny the use of this liberty to the gentile Converts, without destroying their Christian liberty. And therefore our *Reconciler* is mightily out in his Argument, That Church-Governours in their publick capacity are bound to all those acts of forbearance and charitable condescension, which private Christians are bound to; when in this very instance from which he argues, it appears to be quite otherwise: the Church determines for the liberty of the Gentiles to eat all sorts of meats without any regard to the Mosaical distinction between clean and unclean, notwithstanding that offence it gave to the believing Jew; and yet *St. Paul* persuades the believing Gentile not to use this liberty to the scandal and offence of their weak Brethren.

In a word: This fourteenth Chapter to the *Romans* consists of two distinct parts, though not so commonly observed, which has occasioned very confused apprehensions about it.

1. That which equally concerns both Jews and Gentiles, *viz.* not to judge, despise, or censure each other, nor to break Christian Communion, upon account of their different apprehensions about the Mosaical Law: that one believed he might indifferently eat of all sorts of meat, and another eat herbs; one

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preferred one day before another, another thought all days alike. Now all the indulgence to one another which the Apostle exacts in this case, is onely to grant each other that liberty which the Apostolical Synod had granted them, that the Jews might still observe the Law of *Moses*, and that the Gentiles might enjoy their liberty not to observe it; and therefore the Apostle uses much such Arguments to perswade them to this, as were before used by the Council when they made their Decree; of which, more presently: and this part reaches to the 13th verse. But how our *Reconciler* hence infers that Church-Governours must not make any Determinations about things which are scrupled, because the Apostle exhorts them to obey such Determinations, and not to judge and censure one another for such matters which the Church had determined they might both lawfully do, I cannot imagine. 2. The second part peculiarly refers to the believing Gentiles, to perswade them to exercise great charity, and as much as might be, to avoid all scandal and offence in the use of their Christian liberty. That because their Jewish Brethren were so weak as to take offence at their liberty, therefore they should forbear the use of it, when it was likely to give offence. And to this purpose he urges several Arguments from charity to the end of the Chapter, and in the beginning of the 15th Chapter.

But this you have already heard, peculiarly relates to the duty of private Christians in the
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private exercise of their Christian liberty, and can by no means be applied to the Governours of the Church, as exercising acts of Government in making publick Decrees and Constitutions: for as I have already shewn, the Church could not deny that liberty to the Gentiles, nor make any Decree in favour of such Jewish scruples, but only exhorted the Gentiles to exercise this liberty charitably, and without offence. This one thing well considered, is a sufficient Answer to our *Reconciler's* fourth Chapter, since it makes it very plain, that there is nothing in the 14th of the *Romans* to restrain the exercise of Ecclesiastical Authority, whatever scruples men have entertained about it.

II. Another very material difference is, that the subject of the Dispute between the Church and Dissenters, is of a quite different nature from that Dispute which was between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, about which the Apostle gave those directions about mutual forbearance, and a charitable condescension to each other.

The Dispute between the Church and Dissenters, is about indifferent things; between the Jews and Gentiles, about the observation of the Law of *Moses*: Now these two are so vastly different, that there may be very wise reasons for allowing some indulgence in one case, but not in the other.

By indifferent things, I mean such things as are neither morally good nor evil, nor are either commanded nor forbidden by any positive

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tive Law of God. Now if our *Reconciler* can shew any Dispute about such things in Scripture, or any one Precept or Exhortation either to Governours or private Christians about forbearance, or the exercise of charity in such matters, I will yield him the Cause. He has not produced one yet; for the Dispute between Jew and Gentile was of another nature. This our *Reconciler* acknowledges, *That this Discourse is generally thought to have relation to the Jewish Converts, who thought it was unlawful to eat of meats forbidden by the Law of Moses, and that it was their duty to observe the Jewish Festivals; and says, That his Discourse will be more firm, if the Apostle speaks concerning the observance of the Law of Moses, or of the meats and days prescribed by it. And in this sense I desire to take it, and believe this is the true sense of the words; but it may be, when he sees, that this interpretation of the place will overthrow his whole Hypothesis, he will be willing to retreat; and therefore I shall briefly examine what he alleges to prove the Apostle did not refer to the observation of the Law of Moses in this place, but that he rather speaks of meats offered to Idols, and the observing days of Fasting. His Arguments are these:*

Ibid. p. 80.

1. *Because the weak Brethren did not abstain from Swines-flesh onely, and other meats forbidden by the Law of Moses, but they abstained from all kinds of flesh. Whence saith the Commentator on the Romans in St. Jerom's Works, It may be proved that the Apostle speaketh not of the Jews,*

as some conceive; non enim carnes secundum legem, sed sola olera manducabant. Because the weak persons mentioned here, onely did eat herbs, abstaining from all flesh, and not from that alone, which was forbidden by the Law of Moses. But if we will take the opinion of this Commentator, we must understand also, one who is weak in body, who has an ill stomach, or ill digestion, and therefore eats herbs, because he cannot eat flesh, through sickness or old age: *Infirmus etate, aut corporis vigore*: which are the words immediately before; and then how this will reach the case of Ecclesiastical Ceremonies, I cannot tell.

As for his reason, that these weak persons eat onely herbs, it is not evident from the Text. Herbs may be taken synecdochically for all sorts of meats allowed by the Law, no sort of herbs being forbidden; or it may signify, that rather than eat any meats forbidden by their Law, they chose to live on herbs; which might be often the case of those Jews who lived among Heathens, as the Jews at Rome, who are primarily concerned in this Epistle, did. And St. Chrysostom, who positively asserts that this concerns meats forbidden by the Law of Moses, assigns another reason for their eating herbs. Because if they had onely abstained from Swines-flesh, and other forbidden meat, they would have discovered their Reverence for the Law

ἴσταν πολλοὶ ὅτι ἐξ ἑσθίων πνευματικῶν,
οἱ τῇ τῷ νόμῳ καταχρησάμενοι συνειδήσει καὶ μακα-
ρίᾳ πείνῃ, ὅτι βρωματικῶν ἰσχυράτων ἐστὶν περὶ
τήρησιν, ἢ πῶς διαβύλοις τίλειν δοξολογίαν τῷ νό-
μῳ. εἶπα, ὅτι μὴ γινώσκοντες ἀνθρώποις ὅτι
χειροῖν ἀπεχρησάμενοι μόνον πάντων ἐξ ἑσθίων ἀπὸ-
χρῆται ὅτι χριστῶν, καὶ λάχανα ἐσθίων μόνον, ἵνα
νῆσεια μέγαλον εἶναι δοκῇ τὸ γινώσκον, ἀλλὰ μὴ
νόμῳ περὶ τήρησιν. Chryl. in Loc.

of *Moses* still (which he supposes they had a mind to conceal); and therefore to palliate the business, they abstained from all flesh; and eat onely herbs, that it might look more like fasting and abstinence than the observation of the Law. Whether this be a good reason or not, I am not now concerned to inquire; it plainly shews what *St. Chrysostom's* opinion was in the case, which I suppose may be thought as considerable as this Commentators.

But there can be no doubt about this, if we consider what the Apostle saith, *v. 14. For I know, and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self; but to him that esteemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean.* *word, common,* the word peculiarly used to signify the distinction of clean and unclean meats among the Jews; and there was no other Law that ever made such a distinction. For though the *Pythagoreans* did forbid eating of flesh, yet that was an inconsiderable Sect of Philosophers, which could not occasion such a general Dispute as this was; and they did not forbid flesh upon this distinction of clean and unclean meats, which was peculiar to the *Mosaic* Law, but for reasons peculiar to their Philosophy, which were so vain and superstitious, that we cannot imagine the Apostle would grant any indulgence to such fancies.

2. His next reason is, *Because the Apostle doth in the Epistles to the Galatians and Colossians speak severely against their observation of the Jewish*

Jewish Festivals, and therefore here would not speak of them as things indifferent; concerning which, it was only needful that the observers or not observers of them, should be well assured in their own minds, and be permitted to continue in their practice, as St. Ambrose saith, the Apostle here asserts; nor is it like, that in such things he would permit them to abound in their own sense. Which last assertion directly overthrows his whole Hypothesis: for it seems the Apostle might have required of them to renounce the Law of Moses, and the observation of it, whatever scruples they pretended; and then how does it become so necessary a duty in Church-Governours, to renounce their own Authority to gratifie and humour every scrupulous Conscience? for if ever there were reason to be favourable to scruples, it was in the case of the believing Jews, whose scruples were occasioned by a Divine Law, which they were not yet convinc'd was abrogated and out of date: And if, as he says, it was not likely the Apostle should suffer them to abound in their own sense in such things, there is much less reason to expect this from Church-Governours in other matters, where no such Authority can be pretended to justify their scruples. But of the different behaviour of the Apostle to the Romans and Galatians, I shall give such an account in what follows, as will not be much to our Reconciler's purpose.

3. *Because the Apostle confineth his discourse to meats, not speaking of the whole observance of the Law of Moses, he doth not therefore say that*
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Christ had now abolished that Law, or that it was not made unto, and so could not oblige the Gentile World, or any thing which seemeth proper to oppose unto those judaizing Christians, but onely saith that meats did not commend to God, and such-like things; which are all proper to be spoken unto those who, understanding of their liberty, freely indulged themselves in eating of the Idol-Sacrifice. Now this is a notable Argument, if it be well considered. *The Apostle confines his discourse to meats (and days) not speaking of the whole observance of the Law of Moses.* Because his whole Epistle treats upon this Argument, and he does not repeat all that he said in the foregoing Chapters about Circumcision and Sacrifices, Washings and Purifications, and the abrogation of the Mosaical Law, in this 14th Chapter; therefore these meats and drinks and days, must not refer to Mosaical observances. The whole Epistle concerns the Dispute between Jews and Gentiles; and if he can find any other meats and days which the Jews thought themselves bound to observe, and the Gentiles thought themselves freed from by Christ, he will say something more to the purpose.

And whereas he argues, that the Apostle does not urge such Arguments as are proper to prove the abrogation of the Law of *Moses*, it is evident that this was not his business in this Chapter; but he proves what he intended to prove, how reasonable mutual forbearance is in these matters; which supposes the abrogation of the Law already proved (as indeed he

he had sufficiently proved it before): for there is no place for forbearance against a positive Law.

4. His last reason is as good as any of the former: *Because had the Apostle spoken to the strong Jewish Christian, and declared his freedom from the observation of the whole Jewish Law, he would have contradicted the Churches of Jerusalem, and his own practice there: for they were zealous for the observation of it, and did esteem it their duty so to be; and did not judge him a strong, but a disorderly Christian, who being a Jew, observed not their Laws and Customs.* Now if this proves any thing, it proves that St. Paul never did, and indeed ought not to dispute against the freedom of the Jewish Converts from the observation of the Law; and then we shall want a new Commentator upon most of his Epistles, to deliver him from that scandal which all Expositors hitherto have cast on him, that he has in many places industriously proved that neither Jew nor Gentile were under the obligation of the Mosaic Law. 21 Acts 24:

But it is evident in this very place, that those whom our Reconciler calls the *strong Jewish Christian*, St. Paul calls the *weak in the Faith*, who did not understand his true Christian liberty; and writing neither to strong Jewish, nor to strong Gentile Christians, but to the Church of Rome, which consisted of both, in compliance with the Apostolical Decree in the first Council at *Jerusalem*. He imposes no necessity on the Jews to renounce the ob-

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servation of the Law, nor on the Gentiles to observe it : and lest such different manners and customs might occasion Schisms and Divisions among them, he exhorts them to mutual forbearance ; not to judge, nor censure, nor reproach each other upon this account. And this the Apostle might do, without incurring the censure of the Christians at *Jerusalem*, or contradicting his own practice. For he was charged at *Jerusalem* not with teaching the abrogation of the Law with respect to Jews as well as Gentiles, which was a thing so notorious, that he neither could nor would dissemble it ; but with forbidding the Jewish Christians to observe the Law, which indeed was directly contrary to the Apostolical Decree, which delivered the Gentiles from that necessity, but indulged the Jews in it. Thus *James* the Bishop of *Jerusalem* tells him, that the Jews, who were then in great numbers at *Jerusalem*, and were zealous for the Law, were informed of him, that he taught all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, that they ought to forsake *Moses*, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. Now it is one thing to say that they are under no necessity of doing this, and another to say they are under a necessity of not doing it ; the first was the Apostles constant Doctrine, the second was contrary both to his own practice, and to that liberty he everywhere indulged the Jews, as well as in this Chapter under debate.

Having thus cleared the way, and proved that

that St. Paul does here discourse about the observation of the Jewish Law, and that neither believing Jews nor Gentiles ought to judge, censure, or condemn each other for observing or not observing such customs; I come now to shew what a vast difference there is between this case, and those indifferent Ceremonies and Circumstances of Worship which are enjoined by our Church, and that we cannot argue from one to the other. And methinks every ordinary Reader cannot but be sensible of the difference at the first hearing.

For the Dispute here is not about indifferent things, but about the obligation of the Law of Moses. The Proposition our Reconciler undertakes to prove, is, *That indifferent things which may be changed and altered without sin, or violation of Gods Law, ought not to be imposed by Superiours as Conditions of Communion.* And this he proves from St. Paul's Indulgence to the Jews in the observation of the Mosai-cal Law. Now what relation is there between the Law of Moses, and the indifferent Circumstances or Ceremonies of Worship?

Did St. Paul allow the Jews this liberty of observing the Law of Moses upon this reason, that it was indifferent for them to observe, or not to observe the Law? If he did not, then this Example is impertinently alleadged, as not relating to this present Dispute about imposing or not imposing indifferent things. If he did, then the observation of the Law is indifferent still: for that which is once indifferent, must continue so, without some new

Law to alter its nature ; and I know of none in this case.

If *St. Paul* thought the observation of the Law so indifferent, why does he dispute so earnestly against it in this whole Epistle ? Why did he contend so earnestly even with *St. Peter* himself, in behalf of the Gentiles, to maintain their liberty from the Jewish Yoke ? for if it were indifferent to the Jew, it was so to the Gentile : and according to our *Reconciler's* way, it did not become such great Apostles to contend about indifferent things either one way or other. Why did *St. Paul* so severely chide the *Galatians*, who chiefly consisted of Gentile Converts, for their warping to the observation of the Law ? and so passionately exhorts them to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and not to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage* ? Why does he so diligently caution the *Colossians* both against Jewish and Pagan Superstitions, as contrary to the Doctrine of Christ ? This does not argue that the Apostle thought the observation of the Law of *Moses* an indifferent thing : for though he indulged the Jews in it, he would not indulge the Gentile Converts ; especially those Gentile Churches which were planted by himself, and were from the very beginning instructed in their Christian liberty : which seems to be the true reason of his different treatment of the Churches of *Rome* and *Galatia*. At *Rome* it is evident there were great numbers both of Jewish and Gentile Converts ; and as he asserts the liberty

5 Gal. 1.

2 Col. 3.8, &c.

liberty of the Gentile Christian from the Mo-
saical Law, so he indulges the believing Jew
in such observations, and exhorts them both
to bear patiently and charitably with one a-
nother, without despising or judging. But
the Churches of *Galatia* consisted of Gentile
Converts, and either had none or very few
Jews originally among them, as is evident, in
that St. *Paul* from the very beginning had
freely and openly instructed them in their
Christian liberty, and freedom from the Law
of *Moses*; which he could not have done, had
there been any great number of Jews there,
who were all zealous for the Law: therefore
when in his absence some Jewish Christians
had got in among them, and seduced them
from the simplicity of the Gospel to the obser-
vation of legal Rites and Ceremonies, he deals
very sharply with them, and chides them for
their Apostacy; for there was not the same
reason to indulge them in this case, as to in-
dulse the Jews. And we may as well from
St. *Paul's* severity to the *Galatians*, prove that
it does not become Church-Governours to in-
dulse the wantonness and superstitious conceits
and scrupulous fancies of private Christians,
as from his indulgence to the Jewish Christi-
ans at *Rome*, prove the unlawfulness of im-
posing indifferent things, and with much better
reason too. To be sure, since he so sharply
reproves the *Galatians* for their observation of
the Law of *Moses*, which he so charitably in-
dulses the Jewish Romans in, he does neither
under the notion of indifferent things; and

therefore this Example does not concern our present Dispute.

14 Rom. 14.

But you will say, Were not these things indifferent ? Does not the Apostle expressly say, *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is nothing unclean of it self ?* Was not the Law abrogated which made the difference between clean and unclean meats ? And were they not at liberty then to eat or not to eat ? Yes, no doubt of it, as we are at this day. But it is one thing to eat or not to eat, as an instance of natural liberty, in which Religion is not concerned ; and another thing to eat or not to eat out of regard to the Law of *Moses* ; which was the Dispute between the Jew and Gentile, and which is the case wherein St. Paul exhorts them to the exercise of mutual charity and forbearance. Now let our *Reconciler* speak his conscience freely, whether there be any thing alike in these two cases, or whether there be the same reason to indulge a Dissenter in his scruples about indifferent things, which never were commanded nor forbidden by any divine Law, as there was at that time to indulge the Jews in the observation of the Law of *Moses*, which they knew was given by God, and had been in all Ages till that day religiously observed by them from the time it was first given, and which they thought did still as much oblige them as ever. The Dispute is not about the lawful use of indifferent things, but about the obligation of a divine Law : and though it was very reasonable to indulge the Jews for a time
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in observing the Law, till it should be repealed in such an evident manner as to leave no reasonable scruple about it; yet it can never be reasonable to indulge men in their scruples about indifferent things, because there never was, nor never will be any such reason for these scruples as ought to be indulged.

But our Reconciler, in answer to what Dr. Falkner had urged, *That the Apostle in this Chapter (14 Rom.) is not treating about, and therefore not against the Rules of Order in the service of God, meaning by that expression the imposed Ceremonies, adds, That still the sequel is firm: for the Apostle may dispute upon another subject, and yet lay down such Principles, and use such Arguments as equally confute the pressing or imposing of those Ceremonies, as the Conditions of Communion, when such an imposition will silence many able Ministers, and involve many Myriads in the guilt of Schism and Separation from the Church.* Now to this I answer,

1. This may be sometimes true; but then the subjects must be near of kin, and there must be something contained in the Argument which indifferently relates to all other cases which are of a like nature.

2. But yet whatever the Argument be, it depends wholly upon a parity of Reason, and cannot challenge the same authority in any other case, as it hath in that to which it is immediately applied. The Arguments the Apostle uses to persuade Jews and Gentiles not to judge and censure each other upon account of observing or not observing the Law of Moses,

are *St. Paul's* Arguments, as applied to that case, but are onely our *Reconciler's* Arguments, as applied to the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, and have no more authority than he has, nor any greater strength than his reasoning gives them. And therefore he imposes upon his Readers, when he pretends to dispute against the Impositions of our Church from the authority of *St. Paul*, and confesses at the same time, that *St. Paul* does not say one word about the matter. He ought plainly to declare, that there is nothing in Scripture which expressly condemns the Impositions of our Church; but there are some Arguments used by Christ and his Apostles upon other occasions, which he thinks by a parity of Reason condemns these Impositions. But to pretend Scripture against us, when he cannot produce any one Scripture which primarily relates to the imposition of indifferent things, is to set up his own Reasonings for Scripture, though they are generally such as few men will allow to be sense. Our Saviour's and *St. Paul's* Arguments are Scripture, when applied to those cases to which they apply them; but when they are applied to other purposes, though the words are Scripture still, yet this new application of them is not; and I would desire my Readers to observe this, that though our *Reconciler* has alleadged numerous places of Scripture, yet he has not one Scripture-proof against the Church of *England*; the words are Scripture, but applied by him to other purposes than the Scripture intended.

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3. But yet parity of Reason, where it is plain and evident, is a very good Argument; and therefore here I will joyn issue with him, and make it appear that the Apostles Arguments in the 14th of the *Romans*, whereby he perswades them to mutual charity and forbearance in reference to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Mosaical Law, cannot by any parity of Reason be applied to the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*. Now I observed before, that there are two distinct parts in this Chapter, and Arguments proper to each; and though our *Reconciler* confounds them, I shall consider them distinctly.

First, The first part perswades them not to judge, or censure, or break Communion with each other, for the sake of such different customs. *Him that is weak in the faith receive*; 14 Rom. 1. that is, receive to Communion; which the *Reconciler* himself confesses to be the true sence of it: *but not to doubtful disputations*, *μὴ εἰς διακρίσεις διαλογισμῶν*, without judging of each others differing opinions and perswasions of things. *For one believeth he may eat all things*, *another who is weak eateth herbs*. This is the matter about which they differed. The Gentile Converts believed that they were free from the Law of *Moses*, which made a difference between clean and unclean meats, and therefore might eat any thing; the Jew, who was weak in the Faith, and was not yet perswaded of his freedom from the Mosaical Law, abstained from all forbidden meats, and fed on herbs. *Let not him that eateth, despise him* v. 2.

him that eateth not. Let not the Gentile despise the Jew, as ignorant of the Mystery of the Gospel, and that liberty which is purchased by Christ, *and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth*; let not the Jew condemn and reject the Gentiles as profane and unclean persons, with whom they ought not to converse, much less to receive them into their Communion, because they do not observe the Law of *Moses*. So that the Apostle's designe in these words is to prevent that Schism which was likely to be occasioned between the Jewish and Gentile Converts upon account of the Law of *Moses*; he does not say, that either Jews should yield to Gentiles, or Gentiles to Jews, but each of them retaining their own liberty in these matters, they should still own each other as Christian Brethren, and live in Christian Communion together; which shews how remote this case is from the Dispute between the Church and Dissenters: for Jews and Gentiles, notwithstanding their Disputes about the obligation of the Law of *Moses*, might joyn together in all the acts of Christian Worship; whereas the Dispute between the Church and Dissenters is about the very acts of Worship; and therefore while this difference lasts, they cannot joyn in one Communion: of which, more anon. Which is a plain proof that nothing of all this relates to our present case.

But before I consider the Apostles reasons for this, I must a little more particularly examine what he means by *receiving the weak*:
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for though our *Reconciler* and I agree that this signifies to receive to Communion, yet I find we differ very much about that, what is meant by receiving to Communion; as will appear from a long Paragraph wherein he opposes Dr. Falkner about this matter, which seems to me to be the very perfection and quintessence of Giberish.

By receiving one another, I understand owning each other as Members of the same Body, i. e. of the same Christian Communion, a necessary consequence or duty of which, is actually to communicate with each other in all acts of Christian Worship; or as Dr. Falkner expresses it in other words, *That they ought to be owned and judged as Christians, notwithstanding these different observations.* --- He forbiddeth the weaker Jews to condemn the other Jews or Gentiles, as if they were not possess'd with the fear of God, because they observed not the Law of Moses: and prohibiteth those others from despising or disowning these weaker Jews as not having embraced Christ (*ἡ ἀνομία*, v. 3. signifying here, so to despise, as withal to reject and disclaim; as Mark 9. 12. Acts 4. 11. 1 Cor. 1. 28.) because they observed the Rites of Judaism. And therefore he adds, That if by a parity of Reason we will apply this to any other case, it must be to condemn them who press their own practices or judgments in things unnecessary, as being the essential and necessary points of Religion and Christianity; and thereupon do undertake to censure all those who differ from them in such lesser things, as having no true Religion, or inward

Libertas Ecclesiastica.
P. 437.

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relation to, or communion with Jesus Christ, though they live never so conscientiously, and act according to the best apprehensions they can attain.

What now has our Reconciler to say to this, why this is not the true sence of receiving them, to own them for Christians, as Members of the Body of Christ, and such as they ought actually to communicate with? Why he says, *This is tacitly presumed in all the Apostle's Arguments, and without that concession they are not cogent; and of this the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, with which both parties were endowed, were a sufficient testimony: but he declares, that they were to be received into communion, and that because God had received them.* He doth not only forbid the strong to disown these weak persons, as not having embraced Christ; for they who thus conceived most suitably unto that Principle, deny what the Apostle here asserts of these weak persons, viz. that God had received them, that they were Christian Brethren, or that Christ died for them, or that they were the work of God; and so all the Apostles Arguments must be to men of such opinions, weak and unconcluding: but he declares, that they should joyn with them in Christian Fellowship, or should admit them into Communion with them, as God did with him. And having repeated over the same thing again, almost in the same words, he concludes, *Therefore the designe of the Apostle in this Chapter, plainly is to condemn those persons who for these things did take upon them to despise, judge, and refuse Communion with those who differed thus*
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in judgment and practice from them. The meaning of which is, that both Jews and Gentiles did own each other to be very good Christians, and Members of the same Church and Body of Christ, notwithstanding that one observed the Law of *Moses*, and the other did not; but yet they had taken a pique against each other for these different customs, and would not receive each other to actual Communion, though there was nothing else to hinder this actual Communion, but the dispute about the observation of the Law, which by their own confession was no hindrance at all, since they did believe that those who observed it, and those who did not observe it, were both of them very good Christians. Which is so ridiculous a Comment upon the Text, that I could wish it had been spared, for the credit of *Protestant Reconcilers*.

But the onely way to end this Dispute, is by considering the plain matter of fact. Now it is evident that the Jews did look upon all persons as unclean, who were not circumcised and did not observe the Law. For which reason God instructed *Peter* by a Vision not to call any man common or unclean; and the believing Jews retained the same apprehensions even of the believing Gentiles, after this matter was determined by the Synod at *Jerusalem*, as is evident from that Contest between *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* at *Antioch*, which is generally supposed to be after the Council at *Jerusalem*. The opinion the Jews had about the Law was, that the observation of it was necessary

Acts 10.

2 Gal. 11, 12.

15 Acts 1.

to salvation. So the Jews taught the Brethren at *Antioch*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of *Moses*, ye cannot be saved: which occasioned the determination of the Council at *Jerusalem*. Thus it is evident, the Jews at *Rome*, to whom the Apostle wrote this Epistle, did believe also; and therefore the designe of the Epistle, is to prove justification by the Faith of Christ, without the works of the *Mosaic* Law. Now men of such Perswasions as these, could not believe the Gentiles to be perfect Christians, because they rejected something w^{ch} they thought as essential as any thing else in Christianity, viz. Circumcision and the observation of the Law; and for this reason they judged and condemned them as no Members of the Church, which they could not be, without being incorporated by Circumcision and observing the Law: and therefore rejected them from their Communion.

As for the Gentiles, though we do not read that they ever rejected the Communion of the Jews, who observed the Law, yet this Chapter would perswade us that at this time they were very near it at *Rome*; and therefore the Command to receive the weak, seems to be given to the Gentile believers, who were most numerous and prevalent at *Rome*, to receive the Jewish Christians into their Communion, and not to despise the weak, not to reject them out of contempt and scorn, as a sort of such imperfect Christians as scarce deserved the name of Christians, but were still more the Disciples of *Moses* than of Christ. So that
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the reason why both Jews and Gentiles were apt to reject each other from Communion, was; because those who did so, had no opinion of each others Christianity: for it is both a contradiction to the account we have of those times, and absurd in it self, that they should believe one another to be good Christians, and yet refuse to joyn in Christian Communion, upon such Disputes as did neither hinder their Communion with each other, nor prejudice their Christianity; which is as humourous a Schism, as Dissenters themselves are guilty of, and such as there is no Example of in the first Ages of the Church.

But says our Reconciler, *Were the designs of P. 84. the Apostle that which Dr. Falkner doth imagine, (that is, that when the Apostle commands them to receive the weak, he means, they should own them for Christian Brethren, and as such should receive them to Communion) seeing the Schismatick is by the Doctrine of the Church, without that Catholick Church in which alone Salvation can be had: Since therefore we do censure him as one who hath no inward relation to, or communion with Jesus Christ, and therefore no relation to his Body, since we do think him worthy of exclusion from Communion with the Church, it seems not easie to conceive how we shall escape the condemnation of the Apostles Discourse, were the designe of it that onely which he doth imagine. As if it were the same thing to deny Communion to any persons, as wanting something essential to Christianity, and so having no right to Church-Communion; and to shut those*
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men out of our Communion who are disorderly in it, or separate themselves from it: as if it were the same thing to deny Communion to those who are not or are judged not to be Christians, and to cast disorderly and irregular Christians, who will not submit to the Rules and Government of the Church, out of our Communion. The first makes the Dispute upon which we part, to be essential to Christianity, as the Doctor well observed; the second proceeds only upon this Principle, that those who will live in the Communion of any particular Church, must be subject to the Rules and Orders of Worship and Discipline established in it. Which may instruct our *Reconciler* in the difference between the Jews and Gentiles not receiving one another upon the Dispute of the Mosaical Law, and the Churches rejecting those from her Communion, who will not conform to her Rules of Worship; which he endeavours to make parallel cases.

P. 79.

And as for the Reason he assigns, why the Apostle cannot by *receiving* mean, that they should own each other as Christian Brethren, because the Arguments he uses to persuade them to receive one another, do suppose that they did own each other as Christians, is plainly false: for the Apostle persuades them to receive each other, and to own one another for Christian Brethren, because God had received them, because he owned them for Christians; and therefore if God received the weak Jew with all his weakness, and the irregular

regular Gentiles (as they judged them) with all their irregularities, certainly both Jews and Gentiles ought to receive each other. But this will better appear by considering the Apostles Arguments, and shewing how peculiar they were to that case, and that they cannot be applied to the case of Dissenters. Now there are two or three Arguments which St. Paul uses to this purpose, to perswade them to receive one another, though our Reconciler has made a great many of them, by applying all the Arguments in this Chapter; which concern Christian forbearance and condescension, and the avoiding scandal, to this purpose.

1. His first Argument is, *That God has received them*; which plainly refers to what is more largely discours'd in the Council at Jerusalem, where St. Peter gives an account of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Cornelius, and those who were with him, all uncircumcised Gentiles, while he preached the Gospel to them; which was such a visible demonstration of God's receiving them even in their uncircumcision, that he durst not deny Water-baptism, when God had already baptized them with the Holy Ghost. This was confirmed by Barnabas and Paul, who declared what wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. And the same Argument served for the circumcised Jews, who still observed the Law, that God had owned them also, by bestowing his holy Spirit in a visible manner on them. Now if either Circumcision or Uncircumcision had signified any thing in this

14 Rom. 3.

15 Acts 7.

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matter, God would not have indifferently bestowed his Spirit upon believing, but circumcised Jews, and uncircumcised Gentiles.

By sending his Spirit on Jewish and Gentile Converts in such a visible manner, God did evidently declare that both circumcised Jews, and the uncircumcised Gentiles, who believed in Christ, should be received into the Communion of Christs Church; which is here called Gods receiving them. For the gift of the Spirit belonged onely to the Disciples of Christ, and therefore God did in a visible manner own all those for the Disciples of Christ, on whom he bestowed such visible Gifts.

P. 85.

But how does this concern our Dissenters? Yes, says our Reconciler, *it rationally follows, that none should be excluded from Communion with us, who will not by our God and Saviour be excluded from Communion with them.* But he should have said, whom God has in such a visible and miraculous manner received into Communion. And if our Reconciler can prove that God has determined this Controversie about Ceremonies in as visible a manner as he did the Dispute about Circumcision, he will say something to the purpose.

But this is all a mistake, from the beginning to the end. For I know no way of judging whether any man be in communion with Christ, but by his communion with the Church. There is no visible communion with God and Christ, but by a visible communion with the Church; and as for any communi-
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on with Christ which is invisible, certainly the Governours of the Church, who can see onely what is visible, are not concerned about it ; and it is this visible Church-membership and Church-communion of which the Apostle speaks. He proves that God had received both Jews and Gentiles into the visible communion of his Church by the visible gifts of his holy Spirit ; and therefore that they ought not to deny external and visible communion to each other, since God had received them both not meerly into an invisible communion with himself, but into the visible communion of the Church ; which gave them a right to all acts of Church-communion. And from hence our *Reconciler* proves, that the Church must alter her Constitutions to receive those Dissenters into the Church who are not in the Church, and will not communicate with her, because *God has received them* : but how does it appear that God has received them into the communion of the Church, who shut themselves out of it ?

Yes, says the *Reconciler*, the plain result of P. 86. this first Argument is this, That either we without breach of charity may judge of all Dissenters, that they are not received into communion by God, and that they are no living Members of Christ's Body, but a pack of damned Hypocrites, worthy to be excluded from the Church of God, and to be under a severe Anathema ; or if we cannot charitably judge so hardly of them, that we ought to receive them into communion with us, notwithstanding their different conceptions and practice about lesser matters.

A Vindication of the Rights

But what have we to do with the judgment of charity in this case? for the Apostle speaks not of a judgment of charity, but of a visible proof and demonstration of Gods receiving them, from the visible signs and effects of it, viz. the miraculous effusions of the holy Spirit. What have we to do to pass any judgment at all concerning those mens internal communion with God and Christ, who forsake the external and visible communion of the Church? since the Apostle speaks here of Gods receiving them into visible Church-communion. Must the Church alter the most prudent and wholesome Constitutions for the sake of every one, whom she does not believe a damned Hypocrite? May we not hope charitably, that God will be merciful to the prejudices and mistakes of some well-meaning men, without destroying all Order in the Church, and all the Decency of Worship, to let such men into our Communion? When God shall as visibly declare that he receives all those into the communion of the Church, who dissent from the Constitutions of it, and will not conform to its Worship, Discipline, or Government, as he did, that he had received both Jews and Gentiles into the visible communion of the Church, then the *Reconciler's* Argument may be worth considering; but till then, it is nothing to the purpose. And I cannot but observe what dreadful apprehensions our *Reconciler* has of the evil and guilt of Schism, who believes that such Schismaticks as wilfully separate from the communion of the

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the Church, may still be in communion with God and Christ. This his present Argument necessarily supposes: for otherwise it does, no way appear that God has received them; and then it does not follow, that the Church must receive them: and yet certainly Schism cannot be so damning a sin, as at other times he pretends it is, if such Schismatics are still in communion with God and Christ. So that great part of his Book is nothing but putting tricks upon the Church. And when he declaims mostt ragically about involving so many precious Souls in the guilt of a damning Schism, and destroying those with our Ceremonies for whom Christ died, he secretly laughs in his sleeve at those silly people who are so credulous as to believe it: for he believes no such matter himself, but thinks it want of charity to believe that Schismatics are not in communion with God, nor living Members of Christs Body. So that whatever strength those may conceive to be in his Book, who believe Schism to be a damning sin, it is plain, he cannot think there is any strength in it himself: for upon this supposition, that a man may be saved as well in a Schism, as in Church-communion, (as certainly all those shall, who are in communion with God and Christ) it is not worth disputing about these matters. The Church may keep her Constitutions, and Schismatics may divide and subdivide into infinite Factions, and no great hurt done; but that it makes *Protestant Reconcilers* of no use. It had been a much more

honourable undertaking in him, to have convinc'd the Church of her mistake about the damning nature of Schism, and to have satisfied Dissenters that they might continue in their Schism without any danger, than to scare them both with panick fears, and to pelt them with such Arguments as are not worth half a farthing, If this Argument be worth any thing: for if God and Christ have received such Schismatics into communion, I know no reason they have to be concerned about the communion of the Church.

14 Rom. 4.

2. The next Argument the Apostle uses, or rather a continuation of the former Argument, is contained in the fourth verse. *Who art thou that judgest another mans servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea he shall be bolden up: for God is able to make him stand.* To the same purpose, v. 10, 12. *But why dost thou judge thy brother? (that is, whom God hath made thy Brother, and declared him to be so by visible effects, though thou refusest to own him for such) or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.---So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

This Argument our Reconciler thought fit to pass over: for though it was very much to the Apostles purpose, it was nothing to his. For what is the meaning of *judging another mans servant*? Are not private Christians subject to the Authority of the Church, and liable to be judged and censured by their Governors? No doubt of it, if Christ have esta-
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bliss'd any Government in his Church. And yet it seems this was such a matter, as no man had any authority to judge in, but was reserved wholly to the judgment of God.

For the plain case was this: God had publicly declared his Will, by the visible effusion of the holy Spirit both on Jews and Gentiles, that he indulged the believing Jews at that time in the observation of the Law of *Moses*, but would not impose that Yoke on the believing Gentiles. Now when God had so visibly determined this Controversie, neither private Christians, nor Church-Governours had authority to determine it otherwise, or to judge, or censure, or deny communion to each other upon that account; for God may accept Jews and Gentiles upon what terms he pleases: and to judge and reject the Jews for observing the Law of *Moses*, when God is pleased to indulge them in it; or to judge and reject the Gentiles for not observing the Law, when God has so manifestly declared that he receives them without it, is as if we should judge another man's Servant for doing or not doing what his own Master either allows or permits. In such cases as these, as St. James speaks, *He 4 Jam. 11, 12, that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law; but if thou judge the Law, thou art not a doer of the Law, but a judge. There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?* That is, when we judge and condemn our Brother for doing or not doing such things which God has by a po-

sitive Law, or some other publick declaration of his Will, allowed them to do or to omit, *we are not doers of the Law*, that is, do not behave our selves as those who are to receive Laws, and to obey them; but *as judges*, as those who have authority to make Laws, or to censure and controul them. So that this Argument against judging another mans Servant, relates onely to such matters which God has determined by his own authority; and therefore cannot concern the case of our Dissenters, unless our *Reconciler* can prove that God has plainly determined that the Church shall not prescribe the Rules of Order and Decency in publick Worship. What God has left to the authority of the Church in such cases, the Church may judge, and censure, and reject the disobedient, because private Christians in all such cases are subject to Church-authority, and the Church does not exceed her authority in judging them. And this is the Dispute between the Church and Dissenters, Whether they should obey the Authority of the Church in such matters which God has not determined by his own Authority: whereas the Dispute between Jews and Gentiles was actually determined by God, that the Jews should be indulged in the observation of the Law, but that it should not be imposed upon the Gentiles; and therefore when they judged and censured one another upon this account, they exceeded their authority, they judged over Gods judgment, and judged another mans Servant; which the Church cannot

not be charged with, when she judges and censures her own refractory and dissenting Members for their disobedience in such things as are subject to her authority.

3. The Apostle perswades both Jews and Gentiles to receive one another to Christian communion, because though they differed in their practice, yet both of them acted out of reverence to the divine Authority. The Jew knew that the Law of Moses was given by God, and could not be satisfied that it was repealed, and therefore still observed the Law in reverence to the Authority which first gave it. The converted Gentiles knew that the Law was never given to them, and were assured by the same persons, upon whose authority they embraced the Gospel, that they were not under the obligation of the Law, and therefore they thankfully accept that liberty which Christ had purchased for them: And therefore since both of them at that time could truly plead a divine authority for what they did, and not meerly some unaccountable humour and prejudice, they ought not to judge and censure one another for such different practices. *One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike; let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind. He that regardeth a day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not a day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; (which would be a profane and impudent mockery of God, did he not believe that God had given him liberty*

14 Rom. 5, 6,

to eat indifferently of any thing) and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

P. 87, 88.

Our Reconciler represents the Apostles Argument thus : *These persons, saith the Apostle, ought to be received into communion, although they differ in practice and in judgment about these matters, because it was from conscience towards God, and a desire to do what was most pleasing to him, that some did eat, and others not, that some did regard a day, and others not---If charity therefore will teach us to conclude of such as do observe, or do refuse observance of the Constitutions of our Church in these inferiour matters, that as they outwardly profess, so do they really observe or not observe them out of conscience towards God, which they who cannot know mens Consciences but by their own professions, cannot well deny; then must they both by the Apostles Rule rective each other to communion, and not reject each other on the accounts of differences in judgment, or in practice, in these lesser matters.*

Let us then consider what the consequence of this Doctrine would be, if it were true, viz. that the Consciences of men are under no Government ; and when we consider what is usually meant by Conscience, viz. mens private Opinions and Judgments of things, the plain English of it is, that every man must do as he list : and thus all the Authority of Government is over-ruled by the more sovereign Authority of Conscience. This is so extreemly absurd, that it is wonderful to me that men of common understanding should not blush to own

own it. For 1. It is plain, that God will judge the Consciences of men, and condemn them too, if they be erroneous and wicked. The Jews crucified our Saviour and persecuted his Apostles out of zeal for God, as St. Paul witnesses; but God destroyed their City, Temple, and Nation for it. I suppose our Reconciler will not charge all the Heathen Idolaters, even after the Empire was turned Christian, with being *a pack of damned Hypocrites*. Many of them no doubt very sincerely followed their Consciences, and yet were damned not for Hypocrites, but for conscientious Idolaters. All the Laws of God oblige the Consciences of men; whatever their particular Perswasions may be; and if mens Consciences will not comply with the Laws of God, the Law will judge and condemn them; and yet it seems as hard a thing, that God should condemn men who act out of conscience, and a desire to do what is most pleasing to him, as that Earthly Governours should condemn and punish them.

No, you'll say, God is the sole Lord and Judge of Conscience, and he alone has authority to give Laws to the Consciences of men, which no humane power can; but all this is senseless Cant: for what is it to be the Lord of Conscience? and to give Laws to Conscience? Does it signifie any more than a Sovereign Authority to command, under the guilt of sin, if we disobey? And have not all Governours then, who have received authority from God to command, the government of mens Consciences too, as far as their autho-

erty reaches? But this is not the Question, Who has authority to give Laws to Conscience: for whoever has authority to make Laws, has authority to make Laws for Conscience, unless they have authority to make Laws without obliging any body to obey them: But the Question is, Whether after Laws are made either by God or men, every man may equitably challenge a liberty to follow the guidance of his own Conscience, though his Conscience mistake its rule. Now it is plain, that God does not grant this liberty: for he punishes such erroneous Consciences, and will eternally damn those who do wicked actions out of a mistaken Zeal for his glory; and yet if there were any reason or equity in the case, it would more oblige God than any Earthly Governours, because such misguided Zealots are supposed to intend Gods glory in what they do: And if God will not indulge such men in the breach of his Laws, though they intend to please him by it, what reason have Earthly Governours to do it, who receive their authority from God, and cannot imitate a better Example in the exercise of it than God himself?

2. Civil Magistrates ought to take no notice at all of mens Consciences in making or executing Laws for the good government of the Nation. If the Saints should think it their privilege and prerogative to rob and plunder and murder the ungodly, if they should think themselves bound in conscience to pull down earthly Princes to set up King Jesus on his Throne, should Magistrates be afraid of hang-
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ing such Villains as these, as commit such horrid Outrages from a Principle of Conscience? Nay, if men refuse to give security to the Government, or a legal testimony in any civil cause, out of a scruple about the lawfulness of Oaths, is the Government to take notice, or to make any allowance for this? If God does not, Magistrates have less reason to do it, because God knows what mens Consciences are, which Magistrates can never know: Hypocrites may pretend conscience as well as the sincere; and Government could never be secure, if Justice must be administered not by known and standing Laws, but in compliance with every mans Conscience, which is, or may be, no body knows what.

3. The only doubt then is about the Governours of the Church, whether they in making Laws, and in the exercise of Discipline, ought not to have great regard to the Consciences of men. Now I would fain know a reason why they are more bound than either God or civil Magistrates, to suffer men to do what they please, according to their various and different pretensions of Conscience? If there be any equity in it, that every man should enjoy the liberty of his own Conscience, it holds in other matters, as well as these. I suppose our *Reconciler* will not say, that the Governours of the Church are bound to suffer every man to be of what Religion he pleases, to believe what he will, to deny the Divinity and Satisfaction of our Saviour, to worship an Image, or the Host, or the Virgin Ma-

ry, &c. and therefore the most considerable things in Religion are not left at liberty ; and yet of the greater moment any thing is, the greater imposition it is upon Conscience. I had rather submit to twenty Ceremonies, than to be required to subscribe to one new Article of Faith.

But our *Reconciler* pretends onely to this Indulgence in *inferiour matters*. Let us then consider his reason for that : for certainly the less the things are, the less need there is, and the less reason to humour mens Consciences about them. The onely reason he assigns for it, is this: *That those who do observe, or do refuse observance of the Constitutions of our Church in these inferiour matters, do really observe them, or not observe them, out of Conscience towards God.* And if this be a good reason why every man should be left to the government of his own Conscience, it is good in all other cases, as well as in such inferiour matters : for why should we impose upon men in any thing which they observe or not observe in conscience towards God ?

But you'll say, this is *St. Paul's* Argument, not the *Reconciler's*. No, say I, it is the *Reconciler's* Argument, not *St. Paul's*. But does not *St. Paul* say, *He that regardeth a day, regardeth it to the Lord ; and he that regardeth not a day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.* He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. Yes, I grant that these are *St. Paul's* words : And does not this

this signifie that they, who did eat, and they who did not eat, acted out of conscience towards God? Yes, I grant that too. The converted Gentiles did eat indifferently of all sorts of meats, and thanked God for that liberty he had granted them; the converted Jews abstained from all meats forbidden by their Law, and thanked God for their Law, which preserved them from all legal pollutions: but this is peculiar to this case, and cannot be applied to our Dissenters, that they refuse to observe our Ceremonies out of conscience towards God.

God had given a positive Law to the Jews by the hands of *Moses*, which enjoyed the observation of new Moons and Sabbaths, and other Festivals, and made a distinction between clean and unclean meats; and though this Law was now out of date, yet it was not repealed in as publick a manner as it was given, and God had no way declared that they should observe this Law no longer; and therefore those Jews who embraced the Faith of Christ, durst not renounce the Law of *Moses* out of reverence to the Authority of God who gave it: and therefore these believing Jews might well be said to observe days, and not to eat to the Lord, that is, out of reverence to the authority of God who gave that Law. The believing Gentiles were never under the obligation of the Law of *Moses*, and therefore were more easily instructed in their Christian liberty, which God declared by sending his holy Spirit on them in their uncircumcision,
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and by the Decrees of the Apostolical Synod at *Jerusalem*, and they were very well assured by these divine Testimonies, that God had delivered them from the Jewish observation of days and meats, and therefore they did eat, and they did not observe days to the Lord, out of reverence to the divine authority which had delivered them from the Mosaical Law. But where there is no positive Law, nor any publick Declaration of Gods Will, whatever our particular Perswasions and Opinions may be, we do not act out of conscience towards God. For no man can be said to do any thing to the Lord, or out of conscience towards God, in such cases wherein God has not interposed his authority. And therefore unless our *Reconciler* can shew any positive Law either against Ecclesiastical Ceremonies in general, or against the Cross in Baptism, the Surplice, or Kneeling at the Sacrament in particular, how much soever his beloved Dissenters pretend to Conscience, it is absurd to say that they do not observe these things out of conscience towards God; nor do Conformists observe them out of conscience towards God, any otherwise than as they obey that Authority which God hath set in his Church: For there can be no other foundation for Conscience, but either the express Laws of God, or obedience to that Authority which God hath set over us.

But you'll say, may not that man also be said to act out of conscience toward God, who does, or forbears doing any thing out of a perswa-

persuasion that God has commanded or forbid it, though he should be mistaken in it, and he can produce no Law of God to that purpose? While men designe to please God in what they do, surely they may be said to act out of conscience towards God. I answer, I will not contend about words and phraeses with any man, but let them call things by what names they please. All that I say is this, That *St. Paul* does not use it in this sense; nor is any man in Scripture said to do any thing *to the Lord*, who cannot produce a plain Law for what he does. Other men may intend Gods glory in what they do, but they may miss of their aim, when they have no Rule, and incur the divine displeasure instead of pleasing God; and neither God nor men can grant any Indulgence to such a Conscience as this. But when both contending Parties can produce a divine authority for doing or not doing the same thing (which never did, and never can happen, but in this case concerning the obligation of the Law of *Moses*) there is great reason for them to receive one another, because they both act out of reverence to the divine Authority. In a word, two contrary Parties (as the Jews and Gentiles were in this Controversie) can never both of them be said to do what they do *to the Lord*, but onely in such cases where there is a divine positive Law, or a divine Indulgence, permission, or liberty on both sides; which was the case between the Jews and Gentiles, but has no parallel, that I know of.

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Our Dissenters indeed pretend the authority of Scripture to justify their non-observance of Ecclesiastical Rites and Ceremonies; and so did the Jews for putting our Saviour to death, so do all Hereticks and Schismatics, and even Rebels themselves: and if the Government must take notice of every foolish Reasoner, who pretends Scripture, it is in as ill a case, as if every unscriptural Dream and Fancy must pass for an Oracle. This will make no difference before God, whether men pervert the Scripture to their own destruction, or follow the wild Enthusiasms of their own brains; and I see no reason that Governours have to make a difference neither.

By these Arguments St. Paul persuades the believing Jews and Gentiles at Rome, notwithstanding their Disputes about the observation of the Law of Moses, to maintain Christian communion with each other; and they are very proper to this purpose, but can by no parity of Reason be applied to the case of our Dissenters; as I hope abundantly appears from what I have already discours'd.

Secondly, The Apostle by these Arguments having persuaded them to receive one another to Christian communion, proceeds to persuade the Gentile Converts, or those strong Jewish Christians who understood their Christian liberty, not to give any needless offence and scandal to the weak, by an uncharitable use of their liberty, from v. 13. to the end of the Chapter.

24 Rom. 13.

These two, to receive into communion, and not

not to give offence and scandal, are of a very different consideration, though our *Reconciler* makes no distinction between them; and therefore I shall briefly state this matter also, and shew how remote it is from the case to which our *Reconciler* applies it.

The scandal which he supposes the Church gives to the Dissenters, is this: That by enjoining the use of some indifferent Ceremonies in Religion which are scrupled by them, or condemned as unlawful, she tempts them to separate from her Communion, and rather to involve themselves in the guilt of Schism, than to submit to such unscriptural Impositions. Let us then consider what that Scandal is of which *St. Paul* speaks, and by what Arguments he dissuades them from it, and how far it is applicable to our case. 1. Then I shall consider what this Scandal was. 2. By what Arguments he dissuades them from giving Offence and Scandal.

First, What this Scandal was. Now the persons who were scandalized, were the weak; that which gave this scandal to them, was, as they apprehended, an open contempt and violation of the Law of God, in eating such meats as were on all hands agreed to be forbidden by the Law; the danger of this scandal was, lest it should tempt them to renounce Christianity. Let us then compare this with the case of our Dissenters.

1. The weak Jew was scandalized and offended. So far you'll say the Parallel holds good: for whatever the Dissenters think of

themselves, I suppose the Church looks upon them as a sort of weak Christians; and it is not what they think, but what they are, which is to be considered in this case: for these Jews did not think themselves weak, no more than our Dissenters do; and yet the Apostle declares them to be weak, and requires the strong to treat them as weak Brethren.

So far I agree; but then we must consider what this weakness was: for all weakness is not alike, nor equally the object of our charity. Some men are weak, because they are ignorant, and because they will not be instructed; others are weak out of prejudice, and some vicious inclinations; some weakness is to be chastised and corrected, not indulged: and therefore because *St. Paul* requires them not to offend the weak Jew, it does not follow, that the Church must use the same Indulgence to the weak Dissenters, unless their weakness be alike pityable.

Now the weakness of the Jew consisted in this, that though they had embraced the Faith of Christ, yet they were not convinced that the Law of *Moses* was out of date; and therefore durst not do any thing which was forbidden by that Law, nor omit doing what the Law commanded, nor could they endure to see others do so: so that their weakness consisted in a profound reverence for an express positive Law, which all men agreed was given by God, but which was not yet repealed in so visible a manner as to satisfy the believing Jews that it was repealed. Now this was a
very

very favourable case, so favourable, that God himself still indulged the Jews in the observation of their Law; and therefore there was great reason why the strong Christian should avoid giving offence to the weak by the use of his Christian liberty.

But now this is such a case as never was before, and never can be again. Our Dissenters may be weak, but not weak as the believing Jews were, out of reverence to an express positive Law, because there is no such Law which ever did forbid the use of those Ceremonies which they condemn; and certainly there cannot be the same pretence to indulge those who foolishly reason themselves into mistakes and scruples, as there was to indulge those who could produce a plain positive Law to justify their dissent. The case is so vastly different, that I doubt not but *St. Paul*, who pleaded for such Charity and Indulgence to the Jews, would himself have censured our Dissenters. For both the Governours of the Church, and private Christians, are in an ill state, if they are bound to humour those mistakes and scruples which are owing to mens ignorance, folly, interest, prejudice, or unteachable and refractory dispositions.

2. These weak Jews took offence at the open violation of an express Law of God. For the Gentile Christians did not observe the Law of *Moses*, but acted in direct opposition to it. Now this was a just matter of offence to the Jew, while he retained such a great veneration for the Law of *Moses*, which at least

I. 77.

he had some fair appearance of reason to do, It is true, the strong Christian in eating those things which were forbidden by the Law of Moses, did nothing but what was lawful for him to do; but it does not hence follow, as our Reconciler infers, that *the scandal the weak Christian took at the freedom of the strong, who used his Christian liberty in eating these things, was scandalum acceptum non datum, scandalum received but not given, the action being such as the weak Christian could not justly be offended at*: For the weak Christian had as much reason to be offended at this, as he had to believe that the Law of Moses was still in force; and this was the true reason of his offence.

No man can be justly charged with giving offence or scandal, who does not break some divine Law. This was the offence the Jews took, that the Gentiles did not observe the Law of Moses, and is the chief, if not the only case wherein men may be culpably charged with giving offence, without sinning against any Law. The Gentiles did break the Law of Moses indeed, but that Law was now out of date, and they knew that it was so, and therefore were very innocent in what they did; but the Jews did not believe that the Law was repealed, and therefore they were offended at the contempt of that Law; & their offence was so reasonable, that it made it a great fault and breach of charity to offer this offence to them: but what is this to our Dissenters? What Law condemns the Ceremonies of the Church of England? Our Reconciler, I suppose, will
not

not pretend that there is any such Law, or that there ever was any such Law; and therefore we offer no offence and scandal to them; for we break no Law of God, which either is now, or ever was in force against our Ceremonies.

This one Observation, that there is no scandal given, where there is no divine Law broken, would clear up that perplext Doctrine of Scandal, (as it is stated by most men) and make it intelligible to every ordinary understanding; and yet this criminal giving of offence, is never applied in Scripture to any thing but the breach of a divine Law. I meet with but two notions of giving offence in Scripture: the first is, to offend by contempt and ill usage, or persecution; in which sense our Saviour warns us against offending any of those little ones which believe in him, which he calls also despising of them, that is, treating them ignominiously and reproachfully, which is apt to discourage men in their Christian course: but this does not relate to our present Dispute, unless the *Reconciler* will call the exercise of Church-Discipline and Censures against Dissenters, despising them and giving them offence. The second is, when we offend men by our Example, by doing something which proves a Snare, and Stumbling-block, and scandal to them. Now this is never applied to any action, which is not contrary to some divine Law, which either is in force, or is reasonably presumed to be in force by those who take offence at it. Thus the Jews took

18 Mat. 6, 10.

1 Cor. 8. 10. ch.

15 Acts 29.

offence at the Gentile Christians, for not observing the Law of *Moses*, which they knew was given by God, but were not satisfied that it was repealed; which is the case the Apostle refers to in this 14 *Rom.* Another case like this, was concerning eating things offered to Idols, which was against an express Law which forbid all Idolatry or communicating with Devils, as those did who eat of their Sacrifices; and was expressly forbid the Gentile Converts by the Apostolical Synod at *Jerusalem.* *To abstain from meats offered to Idols.* This Law some expounded not onely to forbid them to eat in the Idols Temple, and to feast upon the Sacrifice which was there offered to the Idol, which was indeed an act of Idolatrous Worship; but to forbid the eating of any meat which had once been offered to an Idol, though it were carried from the Temple and sold in the Shambles, and eat in private houses at a friendly entertainment, without any relation to the Idol. *St. Paul* indeed determines this Controversie, that this Law to abstain from meats offered to Idols, did onely forbid them to eat in an Idols Temple, and to feast on their Idolatrous Sacrifices; but if they went to buy meat in the Shambles, or to eat at any private house, they were not concerned to enquire whether that meat had been offered to an Idol or not; but yet they ought in charity to have regard to the scruples of others, who supposed this prohibition to extend to eating any meat that had been offered to an Idol, where-ever they eat it, as well as eating

eating at an Idols Temple; and there being an exprefs Law, and a reasonable Scruple in the case, they were obliged in charity to their weak Brethren, to abstain from all such suspicious meats.

Now indeed it is an act of charity not to offend nor scandalize our Brethren by giving them the least reasonable suspicion of our violation of any plain and exprefs Law of God, when the Law is not imaginary, but visible: for these cases have some equity in them, are but few, and can rarely happen; and therefore are no great and burdensome restraint on our natural or Christian liberty, much less have any ill influence on publick Government; but if we extend this Doctrine of Scandal to all other kind of scruples, it becomes both ridiculous and intolerable. For then every humourous and ignorant and conceited Christian, who can make Laws by consequences, and can extract such Laws out of Scripture as the Christian Church for many Ages never heard of, shall prescribe to me what I shall eat and drink, what Clothes I shall wear, what Company I shall keep, what Laws of Church or State I shall observe; nay, shall give Laws to the Church, and repeal Laws, and impose their own Dreams and Fancies upon their Superiours; which is the very designe our *Reconciler* pursues throughout his Book, to persuade the Governours of the Church, that it is unlawful for them to prescribe any Laws or Rules of Worship which are scrupled by our Dissenters, though without any reason, or with-

without any Law : and truly could he persuade them to this, I should as much admire their prudence, as I do his charity.

14 Rom. 13. 3. Let us now consider what danger the Apostle designed to prevent in this ; what hurt their weak Brother was like to suffer by it. Now this he expresses, *by laying a stumbling-block or occasion to fall in our brothers way ;* 15. *by destroying him with our meat for whom Christ* 21. *died ;* by his *stumbling and being offended, and made weak ;* Which signifies, that these believing Jews were in danger of taking such offence at this liberty which the believing Gentiles so uncharitably used, as to renounce the Faith of Christ, and fall back again into Judaism ; and there was manifest reason for this fear : for since they retained such a mighty veneration for the Law of *Moses*, which they knew was given by God, it was a great temptation to them to suspect that Christ was not the true *Messias*, but an Impostor, when they saw his Disciples so notoriously break this Law, and themselves derided and scorned for observing of it. And therefore the Synod at *Jerusalem* did not determine against the observation of the Mosaical Law by believing Jews, but excused the Gentiles from it, who were never under the obligation of that Law : for it had been an invincible prejudice to the Jews, had the Apostles in express terms declared the abrogation of the Law, which the Jews believed to be eternal ; but it was a more plausible pretence, that the Law, which was originally given onely to the Jews, should not oblige

oblige the believing Gentiles. But yet had the believing Gentiles not only refused to obey the Law themselves, but scorned and despised the Jews for doing it, and used their Christian liberty in an open contempt and defiance of them and their Law, this would have been very apt to have alienated their minds from the Christian religion; which the Apostle therefore calls *laying a stumbling-block or occasion to fall in our brothers way, and destroying him with our meat* (by tempting him to infidelity and Apostacy) *for whom Christ died.* Thus St. Chrysostom expressly tells us, that St. Paul was afraid, lest this contemptuous usage of the believing Jews should tempt them to re-

Αποδίδας τιμὴν ὁ μακάριος Πάυλος καὶ μὴ μὲν ἐστὶν κατὰ τοὺς νόμους βελόνηται τὸ πρὸς ἀγαπῶντες, καὶ διότι οὐκ εἶναι ἡμεῖς βεβούληται ἀδιαφορεῖν αὐτοὺς ἀγανατίζοντες καὶ τὴν τιμὴν αὐτοῦ ἐκτιμῶν ἐν τῇ ἀκαταστάσει, &c.
Chrys. in Locum.

nounce the Faith of Christ. But what is this to the case of our Dissenters? are they tempted to renounce the Christian Religion by the Ceremonies of the Church of England? It is so far from this, that they learn to despise their Teachers, and to think themselves a more perfect and excellent sort of Christians.

But you'll say, it makes them Schismatics, and Schism is as dangerous to mens Souls as Infidelity; and therefore the same charity which obliges us to prevent the one, obliges us also with equal care to prevent the other. Now though I think every good Christian will and ought to do what he reasonably can to prevent a Schism; yet the difference between the case of Schism and Infidelity in point
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of scandal, is very great. While men are weak and unsettled in the Faith, and apt to take offence, and apostatize from Christ, they ought to be treated with all manner of tenderness and condescension, because they are not yet capable of being governed; they must be humoured for a while as Children are, who must be managed by Art, not by Rules of Discipline; but when men are well rooted and confirmed in the Christian Faith, they are no longer to be humoured but governed; they must be taught to submit to that Authority which Christ has placed in his Church, and to obey, not to dispute the commands of their Superiours, when there is no plain positive Law of God against them. This is the only way to preserve the Peace and Unity of the Christian Church; and if men will take offence at the exercise of a just Authority, and turn Schismatics, it is at their own peril. And this indeed I take to be the true notion of the *weak in the Faith*, whom the Apostle in this Chapter commands the strong Christians to treat with so much tenderness, without giving them the least offence; *those who are not well confirmed in the truth of the Christian Religion, and therefore are apt to take offence at every thing, and to renounce the Faith*: And so his *stumbling, and being offended, and made weak*, signifies his being shaken and unsettled in the Faith. Every one who is an ignorant and uninstructed, is not therefore a weak Christian; his Understanding may be weak, but his Faith may be strong; that is, he may very firmly

firmly and stedfastly believe the truth of the Christian Religion, though he do not so well understand the particular Doctrines of it. But these two sorts of weak persons are to be used very differently; you must have a care of offending those who are weak in Faith, but you must instruct and govern those who are weak in Understanding, or else you prostitute the Authority of the Church, and the truth of Christianity, and the just liberties of Christians, to every ignorant, and yet it may be conceited obstinate and censorious Professor; which is a plain demonstration that those directions the Apostle gives in this Chapter, not to offend those who are weak in the Faith, cannot concern our Dissenters; who though they are weak enough, as that signifies ignorant, yet are not weak in the Faith, as that signifies those who are not thoroughly persuaded of Christianity, or not well confirmed in that belief; and therefore are not to be humoured like Children, but trained up to greater attainments by wise Instructions, and a prudent Discipline.

Secondly, Having seen what this Scandal and Offence was, let us now consider by what Arguments the Apostle persuades those who were strong, not to offend the weak. Now our Reconciler has turned almost every word into an Argument. One Argument is, *That Reconciler, it is our duty not to judge, or lay a stumbling-block before our Brother: That it is contrary to charity, and evil in it self: That it caused Christianity to be blasphemed: That it is contrary to*
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the concerns of Peace, and the illustration of the Church, &c. Now I have no dispute with our Reconciler about this, that it is a very ill thing, and very contrary to the duty of a Christian, to give any just offence or scandal to a weak Brother: if we were as well agreed what it is to give offence, as that giving this offence is a very evil thing, the Dispute were at an end: And yet by this artifice he imposes upon his Readers, is very copious and rhetorical in his Harangue on this Argument, and transcribes several passages out of St. Chrysostom, and some other ancient Writers, to shew the great evil and manifold aggravations of scandal, which every one would grant him to be very good, when rightly applied; but we deny that the Church of England is guilty of giving offence to the Dissenters in that sense in which St. Paul and other ancient Writers meant it: and if our Reconciler had pleased, he might have found enough in St. Paul's Arguments to have convinced him that the Apostle spoke of a case very different from ours; which because he has been pleased to overlook, I shall be so charitable as to mind him of it. *yd tohil no won dntol can soth HO lre*

Now I take the sum of the Apostles Argument to be this: That the reason why they were not to offend the Jews by an uncharitable use of their Christian liberty in eating such meats as were forbidden by the Law, is because their eating or not eating such meats in it self considered, is of no concernment in the Christian Religion, and therefore is the proper

proper Sphere for the exercise of charity. For when we discourse of offence and scandal, the first and most natural inquiry is, of what moment and consequence the thing is in which we are required to exercise our charity: for there are many things which we must not do, nor leave undone out of charity to any man, whatever offence be taken at it; but if it be of that nature as to admit of a charitable consideration and compliance, then all the other Arguments against scandal and giving offence are very seasonably and properly urged.

And this is the case here, as will appear from considering the series of the Apostles Arguments. In the 13th verse he perswades them not to put a stumbling-block and occasion to fall in their Brothers way. And to inforce this Exhortation, he adds in the 14th verse, *I know and am perswaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of it self; but to him that esteemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean.* That is, all distinction of meats is perfectly taken away by the Gospel of our Saviour; and therefore if we be well instructed in the nature of our Christian liberty, we may eat or not eat, just as we please; and therefore there is nothing in the nature of the thing to hinder the exercise of our charity, because it is wholly at our own choice whether we will eat or not eat: And this makes it a great breach of charity to eat with offence, *so destroy our Brother with our meat, for whom Christ died, 15, 16 v.* Which may justly cause our Christian liberty, which is a very good and valuable thing in it self,

self, to be censured and condemned on all hands, when it is used so uncharitably to the destruction of our Brother; and therefore *let not your good be evil spoken of*, v. 16.

And as there is nothing in the nature of the thing to hinder our charity, it being equally lawful to eat or not to eat, and perfectly at our own choice which we will do; so neither is Religion concerned one way or other in it. The Christian Religion indeed is concerned in the Dispute about the lawfulness of eating or not eating such things as were forbid by the Law of *Moses*, because this is a point of Christian liberty; and the Apostle does not persuade the Gentile Converts to renounce this liberty, which the Gospel allows them: but bare eating or not eating, without respect to our opinions about it, is of no consequence in Religion; we are neither the better Christians, if we do eat, nor the worse Christians, if we do not. *For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink.* The Gospel of our Saviour prescribes no Laws about the quality of our diet; and therefore it is no part of the Christian Religion to eat or to forbear. The liberty of eating indifferently of all things is allowed by the Gospel, but the act of eating is neither commanded nor forbid; and therefore is no duty of Religion.

But though the Gospel do not give us any direct and positive command about eating or not eating, yet there are some duties which are essential to the Gospel, wherein the life and Spirit of Christianity consists; which in some
cases

cases may be a collateral restraint upon the exercise of our liberty: for *the Kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* And therefore it is an essential duty of Christianity, to deal kindly and compassionately with our fellow-Christians, to promote the Peace and Unity of the Church, and that Spiritual Joy and Delight which Christian Brethren ought to take in each other in the Communion of the same Church, and the joynt Worship of their common Father and Saviour. These are the things which are most pleasing to our great Master, and have so much natural goodness, as recommends them to the approbation of all men; *for he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men;* and therefore in the use of our Christian liberty, we must be sure to have this Rule always in our eye, *To follow after the things which make for peace, and things where-with one may edifie another.* And therefore though the Gospel has taken away all distinctions of meats, and given us free leave to eat of every thing, yet since it is not matter of duty in all times and in all places and companies, to eat such meats as were formerly forbidden by the Law; and since we know that to do so gives great offence and scandal to the weak Jews, without serving any end at all in Religion, and therefore is directly contrary to those essential Duties of Love and Charity, Unity and Peace, and mutual Edification, let us not so much insist on our Christian liberty in the use of meats, as to destroy

v. 18:

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the work of God: for though no meats are now unclean, but *all things* (all kind of diet) is now pure and lawful, yet it is a very evil thing for any man by his eating such meat as his weak Brother thinks unclean, to give offence and scandal to him. *It is good* (much better) *neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor any thing* (of the like nature) *whereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak*, discouraged in his Christian course, and tempted to apostatize from the Faith of Christ.

22. But besides this, as it is purely in our choice to eat or not to eat, there being no Law to require either, and neither eating nor not eating is in it self considered of any concernment to Religion; so it is no injury at all to thy Christian liberty to forbear eating in compliance with the weakness of thy Brother. *Hast thou Faith?* Dost thou believe thou mayst eat indifferently of all meats? Believe so still, and use this liberty privately, when it may be done without offence; but thou art under no necessity of publishing this belief, nor of acting according to it in all companies; but *have this faith to thy self before God*: This Faith makes it lawful for thee to eat, but then thou must take great care that thou dost not do a lawful thing in such a manner, as to make it become sin to thee; that is, thou must not eat (how lawful soever it be in it self) with the scandal and offence of thy weak Brother, which makes it very unlawful. *Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth*; who does not do a good action

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in so ill a manner, as to bring condemnation upon himself.

But then as thy believing it lawful for thee to eat does not make it necessary to eat, nor lawful in all circumstances, when it is done with offence and scandal; so much less does thy believing it lawful to eat, make it lawful for thy weak Brother to eat: for if the Jewish Christian, who *doubteth* (*doubteth*), who stills makes a distinction between meats, and believes it unlawful to eat such meats as are forbidden by the Law of Moses) if he notwithstanding this eat such forbidden meats, *he is damned*, self-condemned by his own Conscience for doing that which he believes to be unlawful: *for whatever is not of faith*, (done with a full perswasion of the lawfulness of it) *is sin* and therefore thou oughtest not to judge, and censure, and reproach thy weak Brother in such cases, but to bear with him, and to avoid giving him any scandal or offence.

23.

This I take to be the true sense of St. Paul's reasoning in this place, to perswade the Gentile Christians not to give offence to the Jewish Converts by eating meats forbidden by the Law; and it seems to me to contain the plainest and easiest determination of the case of Scandal: which I shall therefore briefly review, and inquire how applicable it is to the case of indifferent things in the Worship of God, to which our Reconciler applies it.

1. First then I observe, that the Apostles discourse in this place can be extended no farther

ther than to forbid offering scandal and offence in the exercise of every mans private liberty. The Gentile Christians, who knew that they were not under the obligation of the Mosaical Law, which made a distinction between clean and unclean meats, were perfectly at liberty whether they would eat or not eat such meats as were forbid by that Law: and this was an instance of their own private liberty, wherein no body was directly concerned but themselves, neither any other particular man (excepting the case of scandal) nor the publick state of the Church. For what is it to any man, what is it to the Church, whether I eat such meat or not, when I may lawfully do either? And therefore this is a proper Sphere for the exercise of a private Charity: for Charity (of what nature soever it be) can be exercised onely in such matters as are perfectly in our power; and therefore no private Christian can lawfully extend his charity any farther than his own private liberty extends: whatever others are concerned in as well as himself, especially whatever the Church of God, and the publick state of Religion is concerned in, is the object neither of private liberty, nor of private charity. And yet the Apostle here exhorts them to nothing but what was in the power of every private Christian. And whether we say that this Exhortation concerns onely particular Christians or Church-Governours also, yet it is evident it concerns onely the exercise of their own private liberty.

Now if any such case should happen again
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(which I think cannot possibly be) that in the use of our private liberty in our Diet, or Clothes, or way of living, we should give such offence to weak Christians, as should make them suspect the truth of Christianity, and endanger their final Apostacy, this 14th Chap. to the *Romans* would be an admirable Text to preach on to correct such uncharitable abuses of our liberty ; but what is this to the use of decent but indifferent Rites and Ceremonies in the Worship of God ? for the decent Rites of Worship concern the publick exercise of Religion, not every Christians private liberty : every instance of our private liberty may indeed in some sence be called an indifferent thing, as that signifies what we may do, or may not do, as we please ; but it is not indifferent, as the decent Rites of Worship are indifferent : for the Decency of Worship is the matter of an exprefs positive Law, and the particular Rites of Worship the Object of Ecclesiastical Prudence and Authority. And what a vast difference this makes in the case of Scandal, will appear from my second Observation on *St. Paul's* discourse ; which is this :

2. That this compliance and condescension to a weak Brother must be in such matters wherein Religion and Religious Worship is not concerned. For by this Argument *St. Paul* perswades them to this forbearance, because Christian Religion is not at all concerned in it. *The Kingdom of God is not meat nor drink.* Their eating or not eating, in it self

considered, was no act, nor so much as a circumstance in Religion; and it did not become the charity and goodness of the Christian temper to give such great scandal to a weak Brother, for things in which Religion is not at all concerned.

Prot. Reconc.
P. 59.

Those who expound *meat* and *drink* in this place to signify all the Externals of Religious Worship, especially all such Rites and Circumstances as have not a divine institution and command (as our *Reconciler* plainly does) do mightily mistake the Apostles meaning, and affix such Doctrines to him as are very absurd and unaccountable. When the Apostle says, *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink*, it plainly signifies that the Christian Religion does not consist in eating or not eating such or such meats; that no man is the better Christian for eating Swines flesh or other prohibited meats, nor the worse Christian merely for not eating them. No man questions whether the Kingdom of God signifies the Christian Religion, or the state of the Christian Church; and therefore when he says, that meat and drink is not the Kingdom of God, he must mean, not that it is not the whole of Religion (which no man ever dreamt of) but that it is no part of it, no act of Religious Worship; as I think I need not prove to the *Reconciler* himself, that though the Gospel gives us leave to eat Swines flesh, yet it is no act of Religion to do it. And therefore the Externals of Religion, the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship (how mean

mean and indifferent soever they may be thought) cannot be comprehended under those general terms of *meat* and *drinks*, because this meat and drink was no act nor part nor circumstance of Religious Worship, nor any thing relating to it ; but the decent circumstances of Religious Worship are necessary to publick Worship. Now when the Apostle exhorts them to exercise forbearance and condescension to a weak Brother in such matters by this very Argument, because Religion is not concerned in it , our *Reconciler* will be a very wonderful man, if he can prove that we must exercise the same indulgence in such matters as do concern Religious Worship : if he can prove that the Governours of the Church must indulge private Christians in the different Rites and Modes of Religious Worship, because private Christians must indulge each other in such different practices, as do not at all relate to Religion , I am resolved never to dispute more with him : for I doubt not but he is at the same rate able to make good the greatest Paradoxes in Religion or Philosophy.

There is very great reason for Christians not to quarrel with each other, nor to divide the Unity, or disturb the Peace of the Church for such Disputes as do not properly belong to Religion : for where it is purely matter of our own liberty, there is room for the exercise of Charity and mutual Forbearance. And this is the Apostles Argument, that the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink. But

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where Religion and the Worship of God is concerned, it is of another nature; for it is not in our power to do what we please in such matters, nor to allow others the liberty of doing what they please; and therefore this is not the Object of Indulgence and Forbearance, nor is there any one word in all the Scripture to countenance any such liberty, which would effectually undermine all Order, Decency, and Uniformity of publick Worship.

And therefore when the Apostle adds, that *the Kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, this does not signify neither, that this is the whole of Religion, or the onely thing that we are to be concerned about, as the *Reconciler* understands it: for the external and visible Worship of God is as essential a part of Religion as these; but these are plain and acknowledged Duties of Religion, and we ought not to violate a plain and necessary Duty, for the sake of that which is no Duty at all: Which is the sum of the Apostle's Argument, as I observed before. The necessary consequence of which is, that in all such cases wherein not Religion, but our own liberty is concerned, the great Rule we are to observe is to promote the Peace of the Church, and the mutual Edification of each other; *to follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another*. Now this is a plain Rule which all men at first hearing will acknowledge to be reasonable, not to violate the plain Duties of Religion in
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contending about such liberties, the use and exercise of which are of no account in Religion, not to scandalize a weak Brother, nor destroy the Peace of the Church, and the mutual edification of Christians in love, by eating such meats as we may indeed in other cases lawfully eat, but the eating of which is at no time, and in no case, in it self considered, an act of Worship, or acceptable to God. But if we understand these words in our *Reconciler's* way, that the *Externals* of Religion are of no account, and therefore must be sacrificed to the dearer interests of Peace, and Charity, and mutual Edification, I confess the Argument is plain enough; but it is neither to the Apostle's purpose, nor is it true.

And yet this is the fundamental Principle of all Reconcilers, and of those men who affect the name and character of Moderation, that the *Externals* of Religion are little worth, and of small account with God: But the great business which Christians ought to mind, is Love and Charity, and the practice of those moral Vertues wherein they place the life and substance of Religion; and therefore it does not become them to quarrel about the external Modes of Worship, but an indulgence in such matters becomes the good and benign temper of the Gospel.

Now how these men come to know that God is so indifferent about his own Worship, I cannot guess; nor how the Worship of God comes to be a less essential part of Religion, than justice and charity to men. I am sure
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under the Law God appeared very jealous of his Honour and Worship; and though he rejected all the Worship of bad men, and despised those external acts of Worship which were separated from Justice and Charity, yet this was no Argument that he undervalued his own Worship, because he was not pleased with an empty shew and appearance of it. As for his preferring Mercy before Sacrifice, I have given some account of it already, and may do more in what follows; but certainly Religion is properly the Worship of God, and therefore that is the greatest thing in it. And publick Worship, which is the most visible Honour of God, consists in external and visible Signs; and therefore the Order, Decency, and Solemnity of Worship is so essential to the notion of publick Worship, that there can be no Worship without it: for to worship God visibly without publick and visible signs of Honour, is a contradiction; and therefore it does not seem to me to be so indifferent a thing, after what manner God is worshipped; and therefore not to be left indifferently to every mans humour, upon every slight pretence of Charity and Moderation. However, it is plain that the Apostle does not speak one word of this here, which had been nothing to his purpose, and I cannot find any thing to this purpose in all the Scripture.

3. This Apostolical Exhortation to avoid scandal, concerns onely such cases wherein we are not bound to make a publick profession of our Faith, nor to do that in publick in the view

view of all men, which we believe we may very lawfully & innocently do. *Hast thou faith? have it to thy self before God*; that is, keep thy Faith to thy self, and enjoy thy liberty privately, when thou may'st do it without offence. Now I suppose our *Reconciler* will not think this a good Rule in all cases, to dissemble our Faith, and to keep our Religion to our selves; which would effectually undermine the publick profession and practice of Religion in the World. For if this were once granted, men would find a great many other as good reasons to keep their Faith to themselves, as avoiding scandal. Indeed this Rule can hold onely in matters of a private nature, such as I before observed this case to be: for matters of a publick nature require a publick profession and practice. For let us consider wherein the force of this Argument consists to perswade the Gentile Christians to exercise this forbearance towards their weak Jewish Brethren, not to offend or scandalize them with their meat. *Hast thou faith? have it to thy self before God*; which includes these two Arguments: 1. That they are under no obligation to a publick profession or exercise of their Christian liberty in these matters. 2. That though it be some restraint, yet it is no injury to their liberty, not to do those things publickly which give such offence. For their liberty in such matters is maintained as well by a private as by a publick exercise of it. For if they may do it at any time, their liberty is secure, though the exercise of it may be some-

sometimes restrained. But now if we apply this to the Rites and Ceremonies of publick Worship, what sence is there in this Argument? for publick Worship must be publickly profess'd, and publickly practis'd, or else it is not publick; and therefore there is no place here to avoid publick scandal by keeping our Faith to our selves: for then we must not worship God pub'lickly, as we think we may, and that we ought to worship him for fear of giving offence. So that this does not onely restrain, but it destroys the Authority of Governours, and the Liberty and Obedience of private Christians: for what relates to publick Worship, cannot be done at all, if it must not be done publickly; and that is no Authority and no Liberty, which cannot be exercised without sin, that is, without a criminal offence and scandal.

As for what our *Reconciler* frequently urges, and I have already observed and answered, that it is not desired that the Church should renounce her Authority and Worship, but onely give liberty to Dissenters to worship God in their own way; this plainly shews how vastly different the case of the Jews and of our Dissenters is, and how little they are concerned in that forbearance of which the Apostle speaks. The Jews were offended not at the restraint of their own liberty, for they were indulged in the observation of the Law of *Moses*, but at that liberty which the Gentile believers used in breaking of the Law of *Moses*; our Dissenters it seems are scandalized



lized not so much at what we do, as because they cannot do what they would. The Apostle exhorts private Christians not to do such things publicly as offended their weak Brethren; This great Reconciling Apostle exhorts or rather commands the Church to suffer Dissenters to worship God according to their own way, and to do what is right in their own eyes, and this would remove the scandal. Now these two do so widely differ, that the one is true and proper scandal, and the other is not. To offend a weak Brother by an uncharitable use of our liberty, by doing such things as prove a stumbling-block and occasion of falling to him, is scandal in the Apostle's notion of the word, and the onely scandal of which he treats in this 14th Chapter to the *Romans*; but thus it seems we do not scandalize the Dissenters, who are not concerned, not offended in the Apostle's sense, at what we do, so they might enjoy their own liberty; and therefore neither the Church nor Dissenters are concerned in what the Apostle discourses about Scandal in this Chapter. And as for that offence and scandal they take at the exercise of Discipline and Government, which restrains their wild and sanatiack pretences to liberty, it is no other offence than what all Criminals take at Laws and publick Government; which is so far from being such a scandal as the Governours of the Church ought to avoid, that there is not a greater scandal to Religion than the neglect of it. But I shall think nothing impossible, if our Reconciler
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can prove out of this Chapter, that the Governours of the Church should prescribe no Rules of Worship, nor lay any Restraint upon the giddy and enthusiastick fancies of men, for fear of giving offence to them.

4. The last Argument the Apostle uses to represent the reasonableness of this forbearance is this, that though the Gentile Christians without sin, or without any injury to their own liberty, might comply with their weak Jewish Brethren, yet these Jewish Christians who believed it unlawful to eat any meats forbidden by the Law of Moses, could not comply with the believing Gentiles without sinning against their own Consciences, which brings judgment and condemnation upon them. *And he that doubteth* (which does not signifie what we commonly call a scrupulous Conscience, for that was not the case of the Jews, who did not doubt, but certainly believe that it was unlawful for them to eat such meats; but *doubteth*, as I observed before, signifies him who makes a distinction between meats, and so believes it unlawful to eat any meats which were forbidden by the Law of Moses: he who thus doubteth) *is dammed if he eat, because he eateth not of faith, for whatever is not of faith, is sin.*

Prot. Reconc.
P. 99.

Now here our Reconciler thinks he has us fast; for if this were a good Argument in the case of the Jewish Christians, it must be also in the case of the Dissenters. If the Gentile believers were not by any means to compel the believing Jews to eat those meats which they believed

Believed unlawful, because how lawful soever it was in it self, yet it was unlawful for them to do it while they believed it unlawful to be done; by the same reason the Governours of the Church must not compel Dissenters to Conformity, which they believe unlawful, or at least greatly doubt of the lawfulness of it. For he that doubteth, is damned if he conforms, as well as if he eats. This looks most like a parallel case of any thing yet; and if this fails him, I doubt his Cause is desperate: and yet I am pretty confident that this will do him no service.

1. For first, this is not a good Argument in all cases, to grant such an indulgence and forbearance, that men act according to their Consciences, as I have already proved at large: for this would subvert all Order and Government in Church and State, and supersede the Authority and Obligation of all other Laws, But every mans private Judgment and opinion of things.

2. Let us then consider in what cases this Argument is good; for certainly it is good in the case to which the Apostle applies it. Now I know of but one general case to which this Argument can be reasonably applied, and that is, where every mans own Conscience is his only Rule, not where Conscience it self has a Rule. The Laws of God, and the Laws of our Superiours, when they do not contradict the Laws of God, are the Rule of Conscience, that Rule whereby all men ought to act; and it is a senseless thing to say, that when men are

are under the government of Laws, they must have liberty to act according to their own Consciences; that is, according to their own judgment and opinions of things; which is to say, that though men are under Laws, yet they must be governed by none; that Magistrates may make Laws, but they must not execute them, but must suffer every man, when his Conscience serves him, to break both the Laws of God, and of the Church or Kingdom wherein he lives.

But where we are under no obligation of divine or humane Laws, in such cases every mans own Conscience is his onely Rule; and in these cases it is fit to leave every man to the direction and government of his own mind, because they concern onely every mans private liberty, and have no influence at all upon the Publick: And if in such cases any man should fancy himself to be under the obligation of a divine Law, when indeed he is not, it would be barbarously uncharitable by Censures and Reproaches, and such kind of rude and ungentile Arts, to force him to a compliance contrary to the sense and judgment of his own mind: for when there is no other Rule of our Actions, every mans Conscience is his onely Rule; and if he does that which he believes to be forbidden by the Law of God, though indeed it is not, yet he sins in it; and if we force him to such a compliance, we are very uncharitable in it, and are guilty of offending a weak Brother.

This was the very case of which the Apostle speaks.

speaks. The Law which made a distinction between clean and unclean meats, was now out of date, and did no longer oblige them, and therefore it was lawful both for Jews and Gentiles to eat what meat they pleased; but the Jews still thought that Law to be in force, and therefore though the Law did not oblige them to abstain from such meats, yet their own Consciences (which is always a Law when there is no other) did still oblige them to abstain; and therefore it was very uncharitable in the Gentile Christians to judge, and censure, and reproach them for this: for though they who understood their liberty, might use it, yet a believing Jew could not do this without sin.

And there may be a great many cases in some degree parallel to this: As, suppose a man scruples the use of Lots, and consequently all Games which depend upon Lots; or thinks it unlawful to drink a Health, or to see a Play; or apprehends himself obliged to a stricter observation of the Lords day, than the Christian Church has in former Ages thought necessary: though we should suppose that there were no Law of God about these matters, yet this mans Conscience is a Law to him; and whiles he thinks any of these things unlawful, they are unlawful to him; and it would be very uncharitable by any Arts to force him to do such things as are contrary to the dictates of his own Conscience. This is onely a restraint of their own private liberty, and therefore they ought to be indulged in it,

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especially while they are so modest as not to censure those who use their innocent liberty innocently.

14 Rom. 5.

In such cases as these, there is no other Rule to guide us, but what the Apostle gives, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*; which is a safe and a sure Rule, when there is no other Law to govern us: for this must not be extended to all cases, as *St. Chrysostom* observes upon the place; for if in all cases we must suffer every man to act according as he is persuaded in his own mind, this would subvert all Laws and Government; but this is reasonable in such cases as onely concern mens private liberty, and are under the restraint and government of no Laws but what men make or fancy to themselves. It is true, all men who act upon any Principles, will in all cases do as they are fully persuaded in their own minds; yet this is not a Rule to be given in all cases. It can be a Rule onely in such cases wherein let a mans judgment and opinion be what it will, he acts safely while he acts according to his own judgment; which can never be, where there is any other Law to govern us; besides our own judgment of things: for though we act with never so full a persuasion of our own minds, if we break the divine Laws, we sin in it, and shall be judged for it.

And that this is the true sense of the Apostle's Argument appears in this, that he urges the danger a weak Brother is in of sin, if he should be persuaded or forc'd to act contrary

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to the judgment of his own mind, which supposes that he is in no danger of sin, if he follow his own judgment: for if there were an equal danger of sin both ways, this Argument has no force at all to prove the reasonableness of such an indulgence and forbearance. For if this weak Brother will be guilty of as great a sin by following his judgment if we do forbear him, as he will by acting contrary to his own judgment if we do not, the danger being equal on both sides, can be no reason to determine us either way: and therefore this must be confined to such cases wherein there is no danger of sinning, but onely in acting contrary to our own judgment and perswasions, that is, onely to such cases where there is no other Law to govern us but onely our own private Consciences. And therefore this danger of scandal cannot affect Governours who have authority to command, nor extend to such cases which are determined by divine or humane Laws; and therefore not to the Rites and Ceremonies of publick Worship: for whatever our own Perswasions are, if we break the Laws of God, or the just Laws of men, by following a misguided and erroneous Conscience, we sin in it.

And the same thing appears from this consideration, that the Apostle perswades them to exercise this forbearance out of charity to their weak Brother; but what charity is it to suffer our Brother to sin in following a misguided Conscience? If our Brother sin as much in following a misguided Conscience, as in acting

contrary to his Conscience, he is as uncharitable a man who patiently suffers his Brother to sin in following his Conscience, as he who compels him to sin by acting contrary to his Conscience, or rather by not suffering him to act according to his Conscience. Nay, since external force and restraint may, and very often does make men consider better of things, and help to rectifie their mistakes, it is a greater act of charity to give check to men, than to suffer them to go quietly on in sin.

And here I shall take occasion to speak my mind very freely and plainly about that perplext Dispute of *liberty of Conscience*. It seems very contrary to the nature of Religion to be matter of force: for Religion is a voluntary Worship and Service of God; and no man is religious, who is religious against his will; and therefore no man ought to be compelled to profess himself of any Religion: which was plainly the sence of the Primitive Christians when they suffered under Heathen Persecutions, as is to be seen in most of their Apologies. And yet on the other hand, it is monstrously unreasonable, that there should be no restraint laid upon the wild fancies of men, that every one who pleases may have liberty to corrupt Religion with Enthusiastick Conceits, and new-fangled Heresies, and to divide the Church with infinite Schisms and Factions. The Patrons of Liberty and Indulgence declaim largely on the first of these heads; those who are for preserving Order and Government in the Church, on the second;

cond: and if I may speak my mind freely, I think they are both in the right, and have divided the truth between them.

No man ought to be forc'd to be of any Religion, whether Turk, or Jew, or Christian; though Idolatry was punishable by the Law, and that with very good reason: for though men may not be forc'd to worship God, yet they may and ought to be forc'd not to worship the Devil, nor to blaspheme or do any publick dishonour to the true God. And this was all the restraint that Christian Emperours laid upon the Pagan Idolaters; they demolished their Temples, and forbade the publick exercise of their Idolatrous Worship.

But though no man must be compelled to be a Christian, yet if they voluntarily profess themselves Christians, they become subject to the Authority and Government of the Christian Church. The Bishops and Pastors of the Church have authority from Christ, and are bound by vertue of their Office to preserve the Purity of the Faith, and the Decency and Uniformity of Christian Worship; and if any Member of the Church either corrupt the Faith or Worship of it, or prove refractory and disobedient to Ecclesiastical Authority, they ought to be censured and cast out of the Communion of the Church; which is as reasonable, as it is to thrust a Member out of any Society, who will not be subject to the Orders and Constitutions of it. This distinction *St. Paul* himself makes between judging those who are without, and those who were

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within the Church. They had no authority to force men to be Christians, but they had authority over professed Christians, to judge and censure them as their actions deserved; and this is properly Ecclesiastical Authority to condemn Heresies and Schism, and to cast Hereticks and Schismatics, and all disorderly Christians, out of the Communion of the Church: and no governed Society can subsist without so much authority as this comes to. As for temporal restraints and punishments, they belong to the Civil Magistrate; and if we will allow that Christian Princes ought to take any care of the Christian Church, we must grant them so much authority as is necessary to suppress Heresie and Schism, and to punish those who are disobedient to the Censures and Authority of the Church. How far this may extend, is another Question: I think all Protestants with great reason reject sanguinary Laws in this case; but whoever grants any authority in these matters to Christian Princes, must grant what may reasonably be thought sufficient to attain the end.

Thus I have, as plainly as I could, given an account of the Apostle's discourse in this Chapter about Scandal and Offence, and proved that it cannot be applied to the case of indifferent things in the Worship of God by any parity of reason. I grant *St. Chrysostom* and some other ancient Writers, do accommodate this Doctrine of Scandal to other cases, some of which passages our *Reconciler* has transcribed from

from them; that if we must not scandalize our weak Brother by using our innocent liberty, much less by our wicked examples, by doing things evil in themselves, which aggravates the guilt of the offence. And I grant, such accommodations as these are very allowable in popular Harangues: but I hope our *Reconciler* does not take them for Arguments; and yet if he did, he could no more apply them to the case of the Church and Dissenters, than he can the case of which *St. Paul* speaks.

But because this Discourse has been somewhat long, (though as plain and methodical as I could contrive it) I shall reduce some of the most material things in it into a narrower compass, and compare the Apostle's Arguments with the Reasonings of our *Reconciler*; which will enable every ordinary Reader to judge how unlike they are.

*The Case of the be-
lieving Jews,*

14 Rom.

THE Dispute between the believing Jews & Gentiles was concerning the observation of the Law of *Moses*, not about things acknowledged to be indifferent.

*The Case of the
Dissenters.*

THE Dispute between Dissenters and the Church of *England*, is concerning the use of indifferent Rites and Ceremonies in Religious Worship.

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The weakness of the Jews, which occasioned their scruples, was the effect of a great reverence for an express Law which was universally acknowledged to be given by God, but was not at that time as visibly repealed as it was given.

The offence the Jews took against the Gentiles, was at the breach of a divine Law, which they still believed to be in force, and so had as much reason to be offended, as they had to believe the obligation of their Law, which was so much as to render forbearance reasonable.

That weakness which pleaded for the indulgence of the Jews, was their *weakness in the Faith*, that they were not well confirm'd in the truth of Christianity, and

The scruples of Dissenters are not grounded on any express Law, acknowledged by all Parties to be a divine Law, but are occasioned by their ignorance, and perverting of the holy Scriptures, and obstinacy against better instruction.

The Dissenters cannot produce any plain positive Law, which is or ever was in force against the Ceremonies of our Church; and so have no reasonable pretence to be offended.

The weakness of Dissenters is not a weakness in the Faith (for they firmly believe the Christian Religion) but at best a weakness of understanding, which is not there-

therefore ought to be tenderly used and indulged, as being neither capable at present of better instruction, nor severer government.

For the danger which the believing Jews were in, and which St. Paul endeavoured to prevent, was, lest they should reject Christianity, if Christianity rejected the Law of *Moses*, which they certainly knew to be given by God: and therefore it was reasonable to expect a while till they were confirmed in the Faith, before they gave them any disturbance about such matters as would endanger their Apostacy, while they more firmly believed the obligation of the Law

to be indulged, but to be rectified by wise Instructions, and prudent Restraints; unless we think that every ignorant Christian must give Laws to the Church, and impose his own ignorant and childish prejudices.

Whatever offence the Dissenters take at our Ceremonies, it is not pretended that the imposition of them tempts them to renounce Christianity, but onely is an occasion of their Schism, and makes them forsake the Church for a Conventicle. But this is no reason at all in it self for any indulgence and forbearance, (to be sure is vastly different from the case of the Jews); for by the same reason there must be no Authority and Government in the Church, or no exercise of it, lest of

of *Moses*, than they did the Faith of Christ.

And indeed God himself had by visible signs instructed both believing Jews and Gentiles, not to judge and censure each other, nor to break Christian Communion upon these Disputes, because he had received the believing Jews and Gentiles into the visible Communion of the same one Catholick Church, by the visible effusion of the Holy Spirit on them both, though one observed the Law of *Moses*, and the other did not; and therefore it became both Jews and Gentiles to receive one another as Christian Brethren, and to worship God together in the Communion of the same holy Offices.

those who will not obey, should turn Schismatics.

But now besides that it is absolutely impossible for those to receive one another to Communion without mutual offence and scandal, who observe such different Rites and Modes of Worship, (of which more anon) God has never by any such visible signs declared that Dissenters should be received to Communion, notwithstanding their disobedience to the Authority, and non-conformity to the Worship of the Church. For as for our *Reconciler's* invisable communion with God, which he grants to his beloved Dissenters who refuse the Communion of the Church, *St. Paul* never thought of it, and no body can tell how our *Reconciler* should

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know it ; especially if Schism, as he asserts, be a damning sin : for no man in a state of damnation (which it seems is the case of Schismaticks) can be in Communion with God.

And whoever after this visible determination made by God himself, undertake to judge , and censure, and deprive each other of Communion for such matters, usurp an Authority to judge over Gods judgment , to reject those whom God receives ; which is like judging another mans servant, over whom we have no authority : for we have no authority to judge one another in such cases which God allows, who is the supreme Lord and Judge of us all.

Besides this, both Jews and Gentiles in

But when the Church judges , and censures, and excommunicates those who refuse to conform to her Worship, she does nothing but what she has authority to do : for all private Christians are subject to the Authority of the Church in such matters as God has not determined by his own Authority.

But though our Dissenters pretend Con-

observing and not observing the Law of *Moses*, did it *to the Lord*, acted out of reverence to the divine Authority. The Jews observed the Law, because God gave them this Law by *Moses*, and had not so visibly repealed it, as to remove all just scruples about it. The Gentiles never were under the Law of *Moses*, and God had received them into his Church without imposing that burden on them; and therefore they did not observe the Law, out of reverence and thankfulness to God for that liberty he had granted them. And therefore Jews and Gentiles had reason to receive each other, since it was not Humour, Peevishness, or Faction, which made them differ, but a regard to God, and a reverence for his Au-

science as the reason of their non-conformity, yet these pretences are vain, and not to be allowed of, because there is no plain positive Law of God against it, and neither Governours nor private Christians are concerned to take notice of, or to make any allowance for every mans private Fancies and Opinions; especially in matters of publick Worship, which would bring eternal confusions and disorders into the Church. There is a great difference between mens doing any thing to the Lord, and following their own Consciences, or private Opinions; the first requires a plain and expresse Law for our Rule, which will justify or excuse what we do both to God and men; but mens private Consciences, if
tho-

thority, which they both pretended, and which at that time they both had.

And therefore St. Paul exhorts the believing Gentiles not to use their Christian liberty to the scandal and offence of their weak Brethren.

For this was such a case wherein they might be very kind to their weak Brethren if they pleased, it being onely a restraint of their own private liberty, wherein no body was concerned but themselves: for though the Gospel had taken away the distinction of clean and unclean meats, and made it lawful to eat indifferently of every thing, yet it had not made it our duty to eat such things as the Law had forbidden, but we

they misguide them, may deserve our pity, but cannot challenge our indulgence.

Our *Reconciler* exhorts the Governours of the Church not to exercise their Authority in prescribing the Rules of Order and Decency for publick Worship, for fear of offending Dissenters.

But the Dispute between the Church and Dissenters, is of a different consideration; it does not concern the exercise of a private liberty, wherein all Christians ought to be very prudent and charitable; but the exercise of publick Government, and the publick administration of Religious Offices, which must be governed by other measures than a private charity. It is not in the power of private Christians to dispense in such mat-
might

might abstain if we pleased; and therefore this was a proper Sphere for the exercise of a private charity, *not to destroy him with our meat for whom Christ died.*

Especially considering that the Christian Religion is not at all concerned in our eating or not eating: *for the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink;* and therefore they ought not to transgress the Laws of *righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;* of Brotherly love and charity, and the peace and unity of the Christian Church, which are great and essential Duties of Religion, for the sake of eating or not eating such meats, which in it self considered, is no act of Religion at all.

Especially the case being such, that men

ters as these, nor absolutely in the power of Church-Governours, who are obliged to take care of the Order and Decency of publick Worship, whoever takes offence at it.

And therefore this cannot relate to indulgence and forbearance in the external Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, wherein Religion is nearly concerned: for though they be not Acts, yet they are the Circumstances of Worship, wherein the external Decency of Worship consists, which is as necessary as external Worship is.

And therefore cannot refer to the pubmay

may keep their Faith to themselves, and enjoy the private exercise of their liberty without offence,

lick Ceremonies of Religion; which if they be practised at all, must be practised publickly, because they concern the publick acts of Worship. There is no avoiding offence in this case by dissimbling our Faith, or by a private exercise of our liberty, but Governours must part with their authority, and private Christians with their liberty in such matters, which the Apostle nowhere requires any man to do, no not to avoid offence.

Whereas the believing Jew, who believes it unlawful to eat meats forbidden by the Law, could not comply with the Gentile Christians without sin, because it is against the judgment and perswasion of his own mind; which makes it very reason-

Now though our Dissenters pretend that it is against their Consciences to conform to the Ceremonies of the Church, and our *Reconciler* pleads this in their behalf as a sufficient reason why they ought to be indulged; yet this is not a good Argument in the case
nable

nable, as well as charitable, to leave men to the direction of their own minds in the use of their own liberty, where they are under the government and restraint of no other Law, neither of God nor men: for in this case, if they follow the direction of their own minds, they do no injury to any body but themselves in an unnecessary restraint of their own liberty, but neither offend God by it, nor hurt men; but if they act contrary to what they believe to be their Duty, in compliance with others, they sin in it: for every mans private Conscience is his onely Rule, where there is no other Law to govern him.

of Dissenters, though it was in the case of the Jews, because their mistakes do not merely concern the exercise of their private liberty, but publick Worship; which is not left to the conduct of every mans private Conscience, but to the direction and government of the Laws of God and men. And though it be reasonable to leave men to the government of their own Consciences, where there is no other Law, yet there is no reason for it where there is: for if they sin in acting contrary to their Consciences, (which no man can force them to do) so they sin also in following an erroneous Conscience; which Governours ought to hinder if they can.

This

This I take to be a sufficient Answer to all our *Reconciler's* Arguments from that condescension and forbearance which *St. Paul* exhorts the believing Jews and Gentiles to exercise towards each other, because the case is vastly different from the case of our Dissenters. The Dispute between the Jew and Gentile was not concerning the use of indifferent Rites and Ceremonies in the Worship of God, but about the observation of the Law of *Moses*; and those Arguments which the Apostle uses, and which were very proper Arguments in that case, can by no parity of reason be applied to the Dispute about indifferent things. But there are several other considerations, which I have already hinted at, which plainly shew how vastly different the case of the Jews was from that of our Dissenters. For,

3. Another material difference between that Indulgence *St. Paul* granted to believing Jews, with respect to the Law of *Moses*, and that liberty our *Reconciler* exacts from the Church for Dissenters, is this: that the first had no influence upon Christian Worship, it neither destroyed the uniformity of Worship, nor divided the Communion of the Church; but the second must do one, or t'other, or both; which is such a liberty or forbearance as *St. Paul* never did, and never would allow.

The believing Jews thought themselves still obliged to observe that difference of clean and unclean meats, which was prescribed by the Law, and to celebrate the Jewish Festi-

14 Rom. I.

vals; and this liberty might be granted them, without dividing the Communion of the Christian Church, or disturbing Christian Worship: for whatever private rules of Diet they observed, believing Jews and Gentiles might all worship God together according to the common Principles of Christianity: and therefore the Apostle exhorts the Romans to receive those who were weak in the Faith; that is, to receive them to Christian Communion, to worship God together in Christian Assemblies.

Unreason. of
Separation,
p. 215, 216.

This account the Learned Dr. *Stillingsfleet* gave of this matter: *This being matter of Diet, and relating to their own Families, the Apostle advises them not to censure or judge one another; but notwithstanding this difference, to joyn together as Christians in the Duties common to them all. For the Kingdom of God doth not lie in meats and drinks. Let every one order his Family as he thinks fit; but that requires innocency; and a care not to give disturbance to the Peace of the Church for these matters: which he calls Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost, which is provoked and grieved by the Dissentions of Christians. And he, saith he, that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith we may edifie one another. In such cases then the Apostle allows of no separation from the publick Communion of Christians.*

Reconc. p. 81.

This our Reconciler very gravely smiles at: As if the business here discours'd of, were onely matter

matter of Diet relating to their own Families; and the command of the Apostle, Him that is weak in Faith receive, did onely signifie, Let him dine with you. This, with submission to that Learned Person, I judge a most unlikely thing: for what great cause of scandal could their private Dinners give to a weak Brother, unless they search'd into their Kitchens, or had a Bill of Fare sent in from every Christian Family? This is such leud trifling with a Great man, and in a serious Cause, as I leave to the censure of every sober Christian. For did not the Laws concerning clean and unclean meats, respect their ordinary Diet in their own Families? Was it not sufficiently known, without a Bill of Fare, that the Jews did observe these Laws? Did not this occasion great Heats and Animosities, Judgings and Censurings of one another? Did not some, both Jews and Gentiles, separate from each other upon these accounts, and disturb the Peace, and divide the Communion of the Church? Does not the Dean expound receiving the weak, by joyning together as Christians in the Duties common to them all? Cannot we expound meats, of their ordinary Diet in their private Families, without expounding Receive him that is weak, by Let him dine with you? And yet whereas he says, What great cause of scandal could their private Dinners give to a weak Brother, unless they search'd into their Kitchens, or had a Bill of Fare sent in from every Christian Family? I readily grant they could give none: Nor does the Apostolic command the Gentile Christians to abstain

from such meats in their private Families, when no body was present who took offence at it, but onely not to use this liberty publickly, nor in their private Families neither, if any believing Jew happened to be present who was offended at it.

Ibid.

Well, but our *Reconciler* thinks it most probable, that the Apostle speaks of *eating in the Idol-Temples*. Suppose this were so, it does not alter the state of the case, if they did not eat there as an Act of Worship to the Idol, but as at a common Feast. And whether it be private or publick eating, it is all one, if it be innocent, it has no influence upon Christian Worship; and therefore cannot break Church-Communion, while men forbear one another in such matters. And yet it is evident the Apostle cannot here mean eating at the Idol-Temple, but their ordinary Diet. For this whole Epistle to the *Romans* concerns the Dispute about the obligation of the Law of *Moses*, as I have already observed, and as our *Reconciler* acknowledges to be the general sence of ancient and modern Expositors, concerning this very Chapter.

P. 82.

But our Author proceeds: *The Apostle does not onely speak of meats, but also of observing days, v. 6. Now that was not a matter of Diet, but of publick Worship taught in the fourth Commandment. And so the Dean acknowledges. For some Christians went then on Jewish Holy days to the Synagogues, others did not; but for such things they ought not to divide from each others Communion in the common Acts of Christian Wor-*

Worship. Their going to the Synagogues on Jewish Holy days, did not hinder their Communion in Christian Worship; and therefore they ought not to break Communion on such accounts.

But now these Controversies about Religious Ceremonies, do wholly concern Christian Worship; it is not what Clothes men shall ordinarily wear, what Diet they shall use, or how they shall behave themselves in other matters of a like nature, wherein a great latitude and variety may be allowed without any breach of Christian Charity and Communion; but how we shall worship God in the publick Assemblies of Christians; whether the Minister who officiates shall wear a white Linnen Garment; whether the Child that is baptized shall be signed with the sign of the Cross; whether Christians who communicate at the Lords Table, shall receive the consecrated Bread and Wine, kneeling, sitting, or standing. Now I would fain know of our *Reconciler*, how it appears that these two are parallel cases; or by what Logick he can fairly argue from one to the other, That because the Apostle grants a liberty and indulgence to the Jews in such things as do not concern Christian Worship; therefore the same liberty must be granted in the Acts of Worship it self; though it must either destroy the Uniformity of Worship, or divide the Unity of the Church: especially considering that he has not produced (and I am sure cannot) any one instance of such indulgence granted to private Christians to

dissent from the publick Rules of Worship, and Constitutions of the Church; and if he cannot shew any thing of this nature, all his other Scripture-proofs are nothing to our Case.

And that these cases are so different that we cannot argue from one to the other, I shall prove by these following Considerations.

First, I observe, that the Apostle himself makes a plain distinction between an offence offered to private and particular men, and that publick offence which is offered to the Church, or to the Body and Society of Christians: *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.* Which shews that we are to have a different regard to particular men in their single or private capacity, whether they be believing or unbelieving Jews or Gentiles, and to the Church or whole Community of Christians. For this is an eternal Law in all Societies, to prefer the publick good before the interest of any particular man. And therefore though we must have a tender regard to the satisfaction of particular men, and have a great care lest we offend a weak Brother in such matters as are of a private nature and use, yet in all things of a publick nature, *i. e.* in all things which concern Christian Communion, we are to have a greater care of offending the Church than particular Christians, though their numbers may be great. And therefore we cannot argue, that because we must grant all reasonable indulgence to weak Brethren in such matters

as do not concern Church-communion, which is the case of the Apostles indulgence to the Jews: therefore the publick Constitutions of the Church, and Rules of Worship, must be made to comply with the private Fancies and Humours of men, and submit to unreasonable Scruples.

Our Reconciler owns this consequence as to *Recon. p. 154.* Dissenters: *Seeing the refusal of submission to these things gives great offence unto the Church of God, it equally concerneth the Dissenters, upon these motives, to submit unto them; and it concerns them both to be as the Apostle, careful to please all men in all things, not seeking their own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.* But why could not our Reconciler observe that this Rule equally concerns Governours, as it does Dissenters, *not to offend the Church of God, when he so earnestly disputes that Church-Governours are as much concerned in all these Rules of charity, forbearance, avoiding offence and scandal, as private Christians; and St. Paul urges this Exhortation from his own Example, even as I please all men in all things?* Now if Church-Governours must not offend the Church, they can grant a liberty and indulgence to the private scruples and fancies of men onely in such things as do not concern the publick communion of Christians. The Rules of Worship, and the Methods of Government and Discipline, must be fixt and determined according to the general directions of the Gospel, and with regard to the publick edification of the Church, not to

the pleasing and humouring some weak and scrupulous Christians : for it is a just offence and scandal to the Church, to make some mens private Fancies and groundless Scruples, the Rule and Measure of Christian Worship.

Secondly, This will more plainly appear, if we consider a very material difference between indulging mens private scruples which concern matters of private use and observance, and indulging such scruples as affect the publick Worship of Christians ; that in the first case Christian communion may be secured : Men might worship God together according to the common Principles of Christianity, though believing Jews were allowed to abstain from all meats forbidden by the Law of *Moses*, and believing Gentiles indifferently to eat of all ; but when men differ about the Rules of Christian Worship, one of these three things must happen : Either 1. That Christians of different Perswasions in these matters must divide communion, and separate from each other : Or, 2. That Christian Worship must be made to comply with the groundless fancies of scrupulous Christians : Or, 3. That men of differing opinions must be allowed to observe different Modes and Rites of Worship in the same Christian Assemblies ; each of which are a great offence and scandal to the Church of God.

1. That Christians of different Perswasions must divide communion, and separate from each other. This is the usual effect of such

Disputes

Disputes about the Modes of Worship, as our own sad experience witnesseth. But this our *Reconciler* will not plead for, and to be sure *St. Paul* never intended; as you shall hear more presently.

2. Christian Worship then must be made to comply with the groundless Fancies of scrupulous Christians. That is, there must be no Rules given for the Decency and Solemnity of publick Worship, but what the most ignorant and most humourfome Professor will readily submit to; which is both absurd in it self, and inconsistent with all Government, and makes it impossible to secure the external Decency and Solemnity of Worship, which ought to be the principal care of Church-Governours, as I have already proved.

3. As for the third, That men of differing opinions might be allowed to observe different Rites and Modes of Worship in the same Christian Assemblies: This is as absurd as the other; as sufficiently appears from what I have already discours'd. At this rate the Governours of the Church cannot do their duty in taking care of the external Decency of publick Worship: for who can foresee what Indecencies will be committed, when every man is left to worship God as he pleases? Nay, this very thing in it self is extremely indecent: for what Order, what Decency can there be, where there is no one Rule of Worship? Uniformity in worship is like the proportion and symmetry of parts in the natural body, wherein the external grace and beauty
of

of it consists. Though there were no difference at all as to external reverence in the several postures of receiving the Lords Supper, whether kneeling, standing, or sitting; yet it would be indecent and disorderly in the Communicants who receive together, not to observe the same posture; for some to kneel, others to stand; others to sit. I am sure we should think it so at any ordinary and common Feast, should some of the Guests sit at the Table on Chairs, others stand and eat by themselves in a corner, others sit on the ground, or others lean on Couches: though there were nothing indecent in any of these postures according to the different Modes and Fashions of different Countries, yet such an odd and humourous variety it self is indecent and disorderly at the same Feast. And if it be so at a common Table, I think the indecency is much greater and more unpardonable at the Table of our Lord, which requires the most universal harmony and consent.

Vid. Supra.
ch. 2. p. 124.

Nay, such a variety as this, must needs give mutual offence and scandal to each other in the very act of receiving, as I have already observed. The only reason that is or can be pretended, why every man should be left to his own liberty to worship God as he thinks best, is because men are divided in their Opinions about the Modes and Rites of Worship. One thinks that rude and unmannerly, which another thinks necessary. One thinks that posture or habit, &c. superstitious or idolatrous, which another thinks a decent Rite of Worship.

Now

Now is it possible for the Israelites to sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and not give offence to them? Is it possible for men to joyn as Friends and Brethren in such acts of Worship which they cannot agree to perform in the same manner? Is it possible for him that sits at receiving the Lords Supper, and believes that kneeling is superstitious and Idolatrous, not to censure, or deride, or despise him that kneels? Or is it possible for him who kneels, and believes sitting to be a rude and unmannerly posture, not to be grieved or offended at him who sits? And will you call this worshipping God together, when men cannot agree about it; but one thinks his Brother Idolatrous or superstitious, and he in requital thinks him rude or prophane? For my part, I think it much better they should be parted, than spoil each others Devotion by such mutual antipathies, and reciprocal censures.

No, you will say, there is no necessity of either, that they should judge and censure each other, or that they should separate. *St. Paul* gives a better Rule in such cases to bear with each other, that the strong should not judge the weak, nor the weak despise the strong. But what is the meaning of this? That he who believes kneeling at the Sacrament to be superstitious, should not judge and censure him whom he sees kneel, as guilty of Superstition? Or that he who believes sitting at the Sacrament to be rude and prophane, should not judge him whom he sees to sit, as guilty of rudeness and prophaneness? This is absolutely

14 Rom.

lutely impossible, and implies a contradiction; that we must and must not believe superstition to be superstition, nor prophaneness to be prophaneness; or that I can readily joyn in acts of Worship with him, whom I believe in those very acts of Worship to be either superstitious or profane. I may judge charitably of men, whom I believe to be guilty of some errors and mistakes, and superstitious customs, in matters which do not relate to Christian Worship; I may charitably hope that God will not reject men for such mistakes, and therefore may think it reasonable to receive them to Christian communion, while they comply with the Rules and Orders of it (which was the case between the Jews and Gentiles, as I have already proved) but it is impossible to joyn in communion with such men, without judging and censuring those whom I believe in those very acts of Worship in which I joyn with them, to be either superstitious or profane. And therefore though such men should worship in the same Church or Religious Assemblies, yet they do not worship God in one Communion; such men will naturally separate from each other, and it is, I think, more desirable that they should.

The sum of this Argument is this: That though *St. Paul* required and exhorted the believing Jews and Gentiles to bear with each other in such Disputes as did not concern the Christian Worship, it does not hence follow, that the Governours of the Church must not prescribe any Rules of Worship for fear of
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offending any scrupulous and ignorant Christians ; or that they are bound to alter them, as soon as they perceive any such offence : which inevitably brings nothing but Confusion and Disorder into the Christian Church.

4. Another material difference between the case of the believing Jews and our Dissenters, is this : That the forbearance the Apostle pleads for, was in order to cement Jews and Gentiles into one body, and to unite them in one Christian communion, to prevent Schisms and Separations between them ; and therefore he commands them, *Him that is weak in the faith receive*, that is, into the communion of the Church, to worship God together according to the general Rules of Christian Worship. For the Disputes between them, as I observed before, did not concern Christian Worship ; and therefore a mutual forbearance in other things, about which they differed, would unite them into one body. Thus he exhorts the *Philippians* : *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.* Believing Jews and Gentiles were both agreed as to the truth of Christianity, and what concerned Christian Worship, though they differed about some Mosaical observances ; and therefore the Apostle exhorts them, notwithstanding their other Disputes, to unite in Christian Worship, about which they were all agreed.

This occasioned that Dispute between St. Paul and St. Peter, which we have an account of in the Epistle to the *Galatians*. They were both

14 Rom. 1.

3 Philip. 16.

2 Gal. 11, 12,
&c.

both agreed; that the Gentile Converts ought not to be circumcised; they were agreed also, that the Jewish Converts should be indulged in the observation of the Law of *Moses*, and that both Jews and Gentiles should forbear each other in these matters: and therefore St. *Peter* himself at *Antioch*, before some Jewish Brethren came thither, did eat with the Gentiles; but when some believing Jews came to *Antioch*, for fear of giving offence and scandal to them, he separated himself from the believing, but uncircumcised Gentiles. Now the natural effect of this, was to make a Schism between the Jewish and Gentile Converts, to make two Churches, one of Jewish, the other of Gentile Christians. This St. *Paul* could not endure, and therefore publickly rebukes *Peter* for it. He was willing to indulge Jewish Converts in their weakness, but not to indulge them in a Schism, which this very Indulgence was designed to prevent. Now indeed mutual forbearance of each other, when it tends to unite Christians into one body and communion, is a great and necessary Duty; but St. *Paul* never thought it a Duty, when it would not prevent a Schism, much less when it is likely to prove the foundation of eternal Schisms.

Now I have already proved, that the removal of our Ceremonies, and such abatements as our *Reconciler* pleads for, as they are not the occasion, so neither would they be the cure of our Schisms; to be sure, Indulgence in these matters would neither prevent nor heal our Schisms,

Schisms, as that forbearance which the Apostle pleads for in this place, infallibly would. Their Dispute did not concern matters of Christian Worship; and therefore if they indulged one another in those things wherein they differed, as in eating or not eating those meats which were forbidden by the Law of *Moses*, they might very well agree in those things wherein they were already agreed, as they were in all matters of Christian Worship: and therefore they might worship God together in Christian Assemblies, as one Body, and one Church; which did effectually prevent a Schism.

But while Dissenters differ from the Church about the Rites and Modes of Worship, it is impossible they should worship God together, and to grant Indulgence to such different apprehensions which the Apostle pleads for in the case of the Jews, would onely make a legal Schism; and to remove these scrupled Ceremonies, as I have already proved, would not unite us in one body; and to countenance such Scruples as these by the least Indulgence, would lay an eternal foundation of Schisms; and therefore the Argument does not hold from the case of the Jews to the case of the Dissenters, because forbearance in one case would cure the Schism, in t'other it will increase it.

5. This indulgence to the Jews in the observation of the Law of *Moses*, was very consistent with the Apostolical authority in governing the Church, and prescribing the Rules and

and Orders of Christian Worship; but an Indulgence of Dissenters in the use of indifferent things in Religious Worship, is not so. Our *Reconciler* proves from St. Paul's condescension to the Jews, that the Governours of the Church must not impose the use of any indifferent things in the Worship of God, or that in charity to Dissenters they must alter such Rules and Canons when and as often as there are any who scruple the lawfulness of them; that is, they must part with their Authority (or for ever suspend the exercise of it, which is much at one) to govern Religious Assemblies, and to prescribe the decent Rites of Worship, when there are any persons so ignorant or so humourfome as to dispute their Authority, or the lawfulness of what they command. The absurdity of this Principle I have already shewn at large; but yet if the Apostle had set an Example of such condescension as this, I would readily submit, as not daring to dispute against an Apostolical practice: But if this forbearance, which the Apostle perswades the believing Jews and Gentiles to exercise towards each other, do not entrench upon the Apostolical Authority in governing Religious Assemblies, then it is no President to the Governours of the Church to give up their Authority to Dissenters.

Now this is the plain case here: The Dispute between Jews and Gentiles, as you have already seen, did not concern Christian Worship, nor the government of Christian Assemblies, but the exercise of mens private liberty; and

Vide Supra,
ch. 2. p. 118.

and therefore St. Paul might grant, and might exhort to this forbearance, without injuring the Apostolical Authority, which onely concerns the government of Christian Assemblies, and prescribing the Orders and Rules of publick Worship.

And indeed it is very evident, that St. Paul would never have indulged the scruples of Christians to the diminution of the Apostolical Power and Authority, which he asserted as high as any of the Apostles. He gave several directions for the government of Religious Assemblies; for the regular exercise of their Spiritual Gifts in the Church of *Corinth*, for speaking with Tongues and prophesying; for their demeanour and deportment of themselves, that men should pray and prophesie uncovered, and women covered; that women should not speak in the Church; for their celebrating the Lords Supper and Love-feasts; for their holy kiss; besides his general directions, that all things should be done decently and in order: and after these particular directions, reserves the final ordering of things to himself; *The rest will I set in order when I come.* 1 Cor. 11. 34. This same Power he committed to Titus in Crete: *For this cause left I thee in Crete,* 1 Tit. 5. *that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting.* Now if our Reconciler could shew that in such matters as these, which concerned the exercise of Church-Authority, the Apostles allowed private Christians to dispute their commands, and gave indulgence to every one to do as they pleased, who did not like to do

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- what was commanded; it would be somewhat to the purpose, and might justly be thought a standing Rule for Church-Governours: but the Apostles understood their Authority, and the Primitive Christians their Duty, better than so; none disputed their commands in Rules of Prudence and Decency, nor would they suffer their commands to be disputed without censure. St. Paul commends the *Corinthians* upon this account: *I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.* He commends them for their obedience to *Titus*, and gives the *Thessalonians* this general Rule; *To know them which labour among you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them highly for their works sake.* And what that means, we learn from the *Epistle to the Hebrews*: *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your souls.* And he commands the *Thessalonians*, *If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* Which shews a true Apostolical Spirit and Power; which we have no reason to doubt, but he exercised in other cases, as well as that which is there mentioned.
- 1 Cor. 11. 2.
2 Cor. 7. 15.
1 Thess. 5. 12, 13.
13 Heb. 17.
2 Thess. 3. 14.

Now if this forbearance towards the believing Jews, which St. Paul pleads for, did not entrench upon Ecclesiastical Authority, if it appears from other places that he did assert his Authority, and require obedience and submission to it, one would wonder how the Reconciler

conciſer ſhould hence prove, that the Governours of the Church ſhould give up their Authority to the Diſſenters, or which is all one, not impoſe any thing which through ignorance or ſcrupuloſity, or from ſome worſe cauſe, they reſuſe to obey; which St. Paul never did, where he had authority to impoſe: for as for his becoming all things to all men (of which more in the next Chapter) it referred only to the exerciſe of a private liberty, not of an Eccleſiaſtical Authority.

6. I ſhall adde but one thing more, that this forbearance which St. Paul pleads for, was only temporary. It was a prudent Expedient for that time, which was ſuch a critical period as never happened before, nor could ever happen again, nor could continue long; and therefore there was no ſuch inconvenience in it, but what might be diſpenſed with out of love and charity to weak Brethren. The Jews, who at that time believed in Chriſt, could not preſently be convinced that the Law of Moſes was abrogated, or out of date; but St. Paul ſaw a time a coming which would effectually convince them of this, when God ſhould ſuffer the Romans to deſtroy their City and Temple, and put a final end to the Jewiſh Worſhip; which he ſeems to refer to, when he tells them, *Let us therefore as many as be perfect* (thoroughly informed in the Chriſtian Doctrine) *be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto you.* Now when we ſee a fair proſpect of the end of ſuch Diſputes, and have an Ex-

3 Phil 15.

pedient in the mean time to preserve the Peace and Unity of the Church, certainly Christian charity obligeth all men to mutual forbearance.

But now the case of the Dissenters is quite different from this. They raise Scruples and Disputes after above fifteen hundred years prescription against them, and separate from the Church of *England* upon such Principles as condemn the best and the purest Churches of former Ages; and if their Scruples be indulged, it is impossible there should ever be any Peace and Unity in the Christian Church: for they may entertain and multiply such Disputes for ever, with the same reason that they do now. And therefore there is always reason to suppress those Scruples, which cannot be cured or outworn by time; when Indulgence will not cure the Disease, nor time remove it, it must be stifled and suppressed by Ecclesiastical Authority. Whether our *Reconciler* will think this a sufficient Answer to his fourth Chapter, I cannot tell; I am sure I do.

CHAP. VI.

Containing an Answer to the fifth Chapter of the Protestant Reconciler, or his Arguments taken from St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians.

HAVING in the former Chapter so particularly answered our *Reconciler's* Arguments taken, as he pretends, from that condescension and forbearance which *St. Paul* exhorts the believing Jews and Gentiles to exercise towards each other in that great Dispute about the observation of the Law of *Moses*, there seems little occasion to answer the rest of his Arguments from Scripture, which every ordinary Reader may do from the Principles already laid down. But that our *Reconciler* may not complain that he is not answered, I am willing to undergo the trouble of a needless Answer, if my Readers will be pleased to pardon it.

His first Argument is from *St. Paul's* discourse, *1 Cor. 6. Where he condemneth the Corinthians because they went to law before the heathens---which was a blemish to the Christian Faith; and ministred scandal to the heathens, and made them apt to think that Christians were covetous, contentious, and prone to injure one another, &c. Since therefore our Contentions about these lesser matters do minister far greater Scandal to the Atheist, the Sceptick, &c.*

*Argum. I.
P. 122.*

our Governours should rather suffer themselves to be restrained a little, and even injured in the exercise of their just Power about things unnecessary, than by their stiffness to assert and to exert it, to continue to give occasion to so great a Scandal to the Christian Faith.

This is an admirable Argument, if it be well considered. The Christians must not go to law before Heathen Judges, therefore the Governours of the Church must not prescribe the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship. Yes, you will say, the Argument is good, because the reason is the same, to avoid Scandal. Let us then suppose this was the reason; if we will make these two cases parallel, it must be thus: To go to law with our Christian Brethren is scandalous, and therefore must be avoided; to prescribe the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Religion is scandalous, and therefore Church-Governours must not exercise this Authority. Will our Reconciler now stand to this Proposition? No, that he durst not affirm that the exercise of a just Authority in these matters is scandalous, but the contentions about such Rites and Ceremonies are scandalous, and therefore Governours must not insist on their Authority to prescribe them. But now this way of stating it does not make the case parallel, and therefore he cannot argue by any parity of Reason from one to the other. St. Paul exhorts the Christians not to go to law before Heathen Judges, because it was scandalous to the Christian Profession to do so; and therefore if our Reconciler will make

make a parallel case, he must instance onely in something which is scandalous, and then by a parity of reason he may prove that to be forbidden also: But neither the Authority to prescribe the decent Rites of Worship, nor the prudent exercise of it, is scandalous; and therefore he cannot prove this to be forbid by any parity of Reason. But contentions indeed in the Christian Church, whatever be the cause of them, are very scandalous; and therefore all scandalous contentions are forbid, as all scandalous going to law is. For we must observe, that though the Apostle in the seventh verse tells them, *There is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another*, yet he does not absolutely forbid going to law, as that signifies using some fair and lawful means of righting our selves, when we suffer wrong even from our Christian Brethren, but onely as it signifies going to law before the *Unbelievers* or Heathen Magistrates: for he requires and exhorts them to have their Causes heard and tryed before the Saints, that is, either the Governours of the Church, or any other Christians, whom by joynt consent they shall make Judges and Arbitrators among them. But to go to law in those days, did properly signify to implead one another before the Heathen Tribunals, because there were no other Magistrates at that time, who had any legal authority; and this going to law was scandalous. Thus by a parity of Reason, it is onely that contention which is scandalous, that can be forbid; and therefore for the Governours of

the Church to assert their own Authority in ordering the Externals of Religion, and for private Christians to defend the Authority of the Church, though with some vehemence and earnestness, is not scandalous, for it is what they ought to do; but to contend against the Authority of the Church, is a very scandalous contention, because it is against the Duty which private Christians owe to their Superiours: and therefore whatever Scandal is given by such contentions, is wholly owing to the scandalous Contenders, that is, to the Dissenters, who scandalously oppose the Authority and Constitutions of the Church. And therefore our *Reconciler* ought to have reprov'd the Dissenters, and exhorted them to leave off their scandalous contentions; not to lay a necessity on the Governors of the Church not to exercise their Authority which these men so scandalously oppose; as we find the Apostle in this very place turns the edge of his reproof against those who did the wrong, and gave occasion to these scandalous contentions: *Ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren.* Contentions either about the Doctrine, Discipline, or Worship of the Christian Church, are very scandalous; but is this a good reason not to contend for the Faith, nor to oppose Heresies and Schisms, because these Disputes represent Christianity as a very uncertain thing, and give scandal and offence to Atheists and Infidels? then the Orthodox Christians did very ill to meet in such frequent Councils to condemn Arianism and other pestilent

pestilent Heresies. Where there is a Scandal onely on one side, and Contention is the onely Scandal, this is a good reason against such contentious Disputes; but when it is more scandalous to suffer Heresies in the Church, to see Ecclesiastical Authority despised, to permit any indecencies and disorders, different customs and practices in Christian Worship, than it is to contend for the Truth, and for the Order and Uniformity of publick Worship, we must not be afraid to contend for these things, the onely scandalous contention being to contend against them.

His second Argument, which he draws out *Argum. 2.* to a great length, is taken from 1 Cor. 7. Recon. p. 123. where he tells us, that *the Apostle grants it is good for a man not to touch a wife.* The Apostle says, *Not to touch a woman*: And why our *Reconciler* says *wife* instead of *woman*, I cannot tell. I am sure it is a corruption of the Text, and contrary to the Apostolical command, *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence, and likewise also the wife unto the husband, v. 3.* But to let that pass, his Argument in short is this: The Apostle declares, that a single life has many advantages in it as to the purposes of Religion, especially in that afflicted and persecuted state of the Church, above Marriage; and therefore he recommends a single life to them: But knowing, as our Saviour had before declared, that every one could not receive this saying, he does not impose it upon them; and therefore the Governours of the Church should not impose our Ceremonies, *though*

125.

though it could be proved that there is like profit, decency, or tendence to perform Gods service better, as the Apostle says there was under the present circumstances in keeping their virginity.

Now I would onely ask our Reconciler, whether the Apostle had any authority to impose Virginity on the Christians of those days, or to forbid them to marry? If he had not, (as I think our Reconciler will not say that he had) then his Argument runs thus: The Apostle would not impose that upon the Christians which he had no authority to impose; therefore the Governours of the Church must not impose that which they have authority to impose. Some things may have great profit and advantage in them, which yet are instances of so perfect a Vertue, as is above the common attainments of Christians, and therefore not fit to be made a standing Law; they may be proper matter for an Exhortation, but not for a Command. But what a wide difference is there between the instances of a raised and perfect Vertue, and the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship? It is too severe an imposition to command the one, but there is no difficulty in observing the other. But the difference between Laws of burden and Ecclesiastical Ceremonies, has been already observed.

Vide Supra.
ch. 4. p. 209.

Thirdly, His next head of Arguments for condescension to Dissenters, is taken from that Dispute about eating of those meats which were offered to Idols, 1 Cor. 8. & 10. Now there is no need of any other Answer to this,
but

Recon. p. 127.

but to state this case right, which will convince every ordinary Reader, how unapplicable any thing which the Apostle here discourages is to the case of our Dissenters. And to do this plainly and briefly, we must consider, 1. Who those were who out of a pretence of extraordinary knowledge, went to the Idol-Temples, and eat of those meats which were offered in sacrifice to Idols. 2. Who the weak were who were offended with this, and what the scandal and offence was. 3. How the Apostle reasons about this matter.

1. Who these knowing Persons were who eat in the Idols Temples. Now it is very plain that the Apostle in this place taxes the Gnostick Hereticks, who had occasioned that first Schism in the Church of *Corinth*, and taught the People to despise St. Paul as very ignorant of the Mysteries of the Gospel, and what the just extent of Christian liberty was. For 1. it is plain that he here taxes a vain and arrogant pretence of knowledge, v. 2. *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet, as he ought to know;* which is purposely to warn the Christians against those men who boasted so much of their knowledge, assuring them that they were very ignorant, notwithstanding all their brags of knowledge.

1 Cor. 8. 2.

2. It is evident that these men out of pretence of greater knowledge, did eat in the Idols Temple; *If any man see thee which hath knowledge (who dost so much boast of thy knowledge) sit at meat, & is sacrificed, in an Idols Temple.* Now this St. Paul in the tenth

v. 10.

Chapter

Chapter absolutely condemns, not onely as sinful upon account of scandal, but as sinful in it self, as partaking with Devils by eating of their Sacrifices. No true Orthodox Christian ever did this; but the Gnostick Hereticks did, partly out of luxury, to partake in these splendid Entertainments, and to defile themselves with those impure lusts which were part of their Mysteries, as the Apostle insinuates, ch. 10. 6, 7, 8. v. *These things are our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted; neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play; neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed; and partly out of fear of persecution, against which the Apostle warns and encourages the sincere Christians, v. 13. There has no temptation (no tryal by sufferings and persecutions) taken you, but what is common to men; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* And to justify this practice of theirs in eating at an Idols Temple, they pretended that an Idol is nothing in the world; that the Gods whom the Heathen worshipped, were not Gods, but dead men; or according to the Mythology of the Stoicks, (which prevailed in that Age among the Philosophical Idolaters, and therefore most probably was embraced by the Gnosticks) were onely the names of some divine Powers and Attributes of the one eternal God, which the

the error and superstition of the People had formed into several distinct Denies; and therefore an Idol being nothing, it could not pollute the meat which was offered in sacrifice to it, but it was as lawful to eat of that as of any other ordinary Feast.

2. Let us consider who these weak persons were, who were offended and scandalized at this liberty which the Gnosticks took. Now it is as plain, that these were a sort of very imperfect Christians, who together with the Faith of Christ, retained many of their old Pagan Superstitions, as the Jews did the observation of the Mosaical Law. This appears from that account St. Paul gives of them, that they were men who did not understand that an Idol is nothing, but look'd upon them at least as some inferiour Gods, and frequented their Temples, and eat of the meat offered to them, under the notion of Sacrifices, and thereby did defile and pollute themselves with Idolatrous Worship.

v. 7.

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the Idol to this hour eat it as a thing offered unto Idols, and their conscience being weak (a sick, misinformed, corrupt conscience) is defiled with Idolatry. And therefore the scandal which was given to these men, was this; that when they saw those who pretended to such perfect knowledge in the Mystery of Christianity, eat of the Sacrifice in the Idols Temple, this confirmed them in their error and Idolatry, and made them conclude that such Pagan Superstitions as these were
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V. 10, 11.

reconcilable with the Faith of Christ. For if any man ^{has} thee, which hath knowledge, sit or meat in an Idols Temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to Idols, and through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died, by being confirmed in his Idolatry by thy Example?

3. Now the Apostle disputes against this practice of the Gnosticks, of eating in the Idols Temple, two several ways: 1. Upon the supposition of the lawfulness of it: 2. By proving it unlawful.

1. Upon the supposition of the lawfulness of it: and this he does in the eighth Chapter. He allows that Principle of the Gnosticks, That an Idol is nothing in the world; and supposes for argument sake, that this would justify those who have this knowledge in eating at an Idols Temple, (for that the Apostle himself was not of this mind, appears from the tenth Chapter, of which more presently): yet since there were so many professed Christians among them who were still leavened with their Pagan Superstitions, and could not presently renounce that kind of Worship which they had been so long accustomed to, (as some Copies read it ^{instead} instead of ^{corrupted} V. 7. that some out of custom to the Idol, instead of with conscience of the Idol) it was very uncharitable by doing the same thing which they did, though with very different notions and apprehensions, to confirm them in their Idolatrous Practices. Though these

these knowing Gnosticks who believed an Idol to be nothing, might eat in the Idols Temple without being guilty of Idolatry, yet they must acknowledge that those who believed these Idols to be Gods, and did eat that meat which was offered to them under the notion of Sacrifices, were guilty of Idolatry, and therefore they were guilty of a very great sin; when by doing the same thing, though without Idolatry, they encouraged those to do so too, who were certainly guilty of Idolatry in it.

And the guilt of this is so much the greater, because though they should suppose it lawful to eat at an Idols Temple, yet they were under no necessity of doing it; if they did not sin in it, yet neither did they please God merely by eating such meats as were offered to Idols: for merely to eat or not to eat any kind of meats, is not in it self an acceptable service to God. *Meat commendeth us not to God: for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse.* And therefore certainly we may abstain from it without any other injury than laying some little restraints upon the exercise of our private liberty; and this is therefore a proper matter for the exercise of Christian charity, as the Apostle had discoursed in the case of the Jews and Gentiles.

v. 8.

And though the Gnosticks thought that eating in an Idols Temple was a great argument of the perfection of their knowledge, yet the Apostle tells them, that charity and the care

v. 8, 10.

v. 1.

care of their Brothers soul, was to be preferred before such a vain boast of knowledge : *Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak--and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died. For which reason in the beginning he told them, Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.*

This is the sum of the Apostle's reasoning in this eighth Chapter, upon a supposition that it were lawful to eat in an Idols Temple. Now what affinity is there between this case, and that of our Dissenters? Those who knew that an Idol was nothing, and therefore that it could not pollute the meat which was offered in sacrifice to it, might eat in an Idols Temple without Idolatry; but yet ought not to do it, when their Example, though innocent in it self, would confirm others in actual Idolatry: therefore the Governours of the Church must not prescribe the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Worship, because Dissenters will not obey them, but turn Schismatics. If our Reconciler be not ashamed to argue at this rate, I am ashamed to confute him.

Prot. Reconc.
p. 127.

But it is plain, he mistook the case. For he says, *The Apostle grants that it is lawful in it self for Christians to eat of things offered to Idols,* (he should have added, in an Idols Temple, where it had an immediate relation to the Idol, which was the matter in dispute between the Apostle and the Gnosticks) *because an Idol was nothing in the world.* But now the Apostle

Apostle does not grant this, but onely at present supposes the lawfulness of it: for in the tenth Chapter he professedly confutes it. He tells them that to partake of a Sacrifice, signifies our communion with that being to whom the Sacrifice is offered. Thus it was with the Jewish Sacrifices: *Behold Israel after the flesh, are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?* Thus it is in the commemorative Sacrifice of the Lords Supper: *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the bloud of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* And thus to eat of the Idols Sacrifice in the Idols Temple, is communion with the Idol. Well says the Gnostick, what communion can there be with that which is not? or will you say, *That an Idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to Idols is any thing?* Will you say, that there are any such Gods as the Heathens worship? Or will you say, that that is a Sacrifice, or that that meat is polluted which is offered to nothing? No, says the Apostle, I do not say that there are any such Gods as the Heathens worship; for they worshipped dead men and women, who cannot be present at their Sacrifices to receive their Worship, or it may be they worship onely some fanciful and poetick Names and Fictions: but this I say, that though *Jupiter* and *Bacchus*, *Minerva* and *Diana*, and the rest of the poetick Deities, are meer fictitious Gods, yet wicked Spirits supply their places, receive their Worship, and

1 Cor. 10.

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attend their Sacrifices ; and therefore though these Heathen Idolaters be not in communion with those fictitious Gods whom they pretend to worship, yet they are in communion with Devils, who assume the names of these Gods. *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God ; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with Devils.* Whether this can be reconciled with the lawfulness of eating in an Idols Temple, because an Idol is nothing in the world, let our Author consider.

But he proceeds. He (the Apostle) moreover grants, *that they who out of conscience did abstain from eating of such things, had a weak conscience, and that their conscience was defiled by eating of such things, onely because they wanted knowledge, or were not well perswaded of this truth, that Christians had a liberty or power to be partakers of these things, v. 7, 9.* He therefore grants, *that the weak brother was mistaken, and that the strong gave him no just occasion of offence.* Which is every word false, as appears from what I have already discoursed.

His interpretation of a *weak Conscience*, to be such a Conscience as did abstain from eating of such things, is directly contrary to the Text, which affirms that they did eat : *For some with conscience of the Idol, unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an Idol, and their conscience being weak is defiled.* They were such as were encouraged and emboldned by the example of the Gnosticks, to eat those things which were offered to Idols : So that they did not do
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this with a fearful, timorous, scrupulous, doubting Conscience, but with a full assurance and perswasion of the lawfulness of it. And therefore this weakness did not consist in the tenderness, but in the corruption and debauchery of their Conscience, that they believed they might still sacrifice to their Heathen Gods, and that Christianity did allow them to do so; in which Perswasion they were confirmed by the Example of those professed Christians whom they saw sit at meat in the Idols Temple. Nor therefore were their Consciences defiled, as our Reconciler asserts, *only because they wanted knowledge, or were not well perswaded of this truth, that Christians had a liberty or power to eat of these things*: for they were too well perswaded not of *this truth*, but of this great and fatal error, that it was lawful for Christians to sacrifice to Idols, and to eat of their Sacrifices. And thus their Consciences was defiled, not by acting doubtfully, but by committing Idolatry. So that the weak Brother was mistaken indeed, but the mistake lay quite on the other side; and those Gnostick Hereticks whom our Reconciler calls the *strong Christians*, did give just occasion of offence, not by perswading, much less compelling the weak to do what he suspected to be unlawful, but by confirming him in these Idolatrous Practices to which he was so strongly addicted by their Examples.

And therefore when, as he observes, *the Apostle exhorts those Christians who had attained to this knowledge* (or rather who pretended to

such extraordinary knowledge, which indeed they had not) *not to use it so as to give offence to the weak Conscience of their Brother, who had this knowledge*, his meaning is not, that they should indulge such persons in their weakness and mistakes, but that they should have a care by their examples of confirming them in such mistakes. They must not use their liberty, which they supposed they had, of eating in an Idols Temple, not because some ignorant Christians scrupled the lawfulness of it, but because those imperfect weak Christians who were still addicted to the Worship of their Country Gods; would be confirmed in their Idolatrous Worship by seeing them eat of the Heathen Sacrifices, which was a known and venerable part of the Pagan Worship. And how this pleads for indulgence to the errors and mistakes of Dissenters, I cannot guess, when the only scandal the Apostle here mentions, and exhorts them to avoid, is the confirming such weak Christians in their errors and wicked practices; which our *Reconciler*, who has contributed so much to harden these men in their Schism, should do well to consider.

But let us proceed in *St. Paul's* discourse about eating those meats which were offered in sacrifice to Idols. Having in the eighth Chapter disputed against the practice of eating in an Idols Temple, upon supposition of the lawfulness of it: for how lawful soever it was, it was very uncharitable, when hereby they confirmed their weak Brother in his Idolatrous Worship. And in the tenth Chapter

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(as I have already shewn) having proved the unlawfulness of eating in an Idols Temple, notwithstanding that pretence, that an Idol is nothing in the world, he comes to give a more particular decision of this Controversie, to prevent those scruples which otherwise might disturb very good Christians.

For in that Age and place wherein they lived, without infinite care and scrupulosity, they could not avoid eating of meats offered to Idols: for what was not spent in the Idols Feast, was sold in the Shambles, or spent at their private houses; and therefore they neither could buy any meat in the Market, nor eat at the private house of any Pagan or Heathen Idölater, but they were in danger of eating meats offered to Idols.

To salve this difficulty, the Apostle tells them, that they should eat any meat which was sold in the Shambles, or set before them at private houses, without asking any questions for conscience sake; that is, without enquiring whether that meat had been offered in sacrifice to an Idol, or making any scruple about such matters: *for the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof*; that is, all Creatures are Gods, who has freely given them to us for our use, and we may as freely use them, when they have no relation to any Idolatrous Worship, as to be sure they have not, when they are exposed to sale in the Shambles, or used for private Entertainments.

But yet if any person present acquaint you that this was offered in sacrifice, then you

1 Cor. 10. 25,
26, 27.

v. 28.

must abstain for his sake that shewed it : and there is no great damage in this, *since the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof* : God has made such ample provision for us, that we are not confined to any one dish, but when it is inexpedient to eat of one thing, we need not be a hungry for all that, having such variety of provisions, which there can be no scruple about to support and refresh us.

Who these were for whose sake the Apostle exhorts the *Corinthians* to abstain from eating of meats offered to Idols, even at a private Entertainment, which yet he asserts they might lawfully do, is not plain in the Text : *If any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice to Idols, eat not.* But whether this man for whose sake they should abstain be a Christian or an Infidel, is not said. The unbeliever, at whose house the Christian is supposed to eat, might accidentally take notice that such meat had been offered in sacrifice to such a God, and in this case the Christian might be obliged to forbear, to shew his abhorrence and detestation of Idols, that he might not do any thing which seems never so little to countenance Idolatry. If it were a Christian who gave this information, it might either be one who did really scruple the lawfulness of eating any meat that was offered to an Idol, though out of the Idols Temple, and then he who understood his liberty, ought to forbear for his sake who did not ; or it was one of those weak and imperfect Christians whom the Apostle mentioned in the eighth Chap-

Chapter, who was so far from scrupling the lawfulness of eating such meats at a private house, that he thought it lawful to sacrifice to these Heathen Gods, and to partake of the Sacrifice in the Idols Temple, and then the sound Christian was to forbear for fear of encouraging such weak Christians in their Idolatry: for they might apprehend it as lawful to sacrifice to an Idol, as to eat of the Sacrifice; and as lawful to eat of the Sacrifice in the Idols Temple, as in a private house. And thus the use of their innocent liberty in eating what is set before them without scruple, might confirm such men in their Idolatrous practices, and for that reason they were to forbear. And it is probable enough that St. Paul might have respect to all these, from what he adds, *v. 32. Give none offence neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God.* Not to the Jew, who had a great abhorrence of Idolatry, by doing any thing which should make them suspect you of the least approach to Idolatry, which would confirm them in their aversion to Christianity; not to the Gentile, by confirming them in their Idolatry; not to the Church of God, by scandalizing either weak or scrupulous Christians, much less by scandalizing the Christian Profession, as the Gnosticks did by eating in the Idols Temple.

But how any thing of all this makes to our Reconciler's purpose, I cannot see; that which comes nearest the business is, if we suppose that the Apostle commands them to abstain

1 Cor. 8. 8.

for the sake of those who scrupled the lawfulness of such meats : but then this forbearance was only in the exercise of their private liberty in eating or not eating, wherein Religion is not immediately concerned : for though it were lawful to eat of such meats, yet it was not their duty to do it ; their eating in it self considered, did not please God, though they eat without scandal, much less when their eating was an offence to weak Christians. *Meat commendeth us not to God : for neither if we eat, are we the better ; neither if we eat not, are we the worse,* as he had before told the Romans. *The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink :* and therefore in such cases it became them to exercise great charity in the use of their liberty. But how little this makes to our *Reconciler's* purpose, I have already shewn at large in the fifth Chapter ; and our *Reconciler* has offered nothing new here to deserve a new Answer.

All that remains to be considered in this Chapter, is the Example of *St. Paul* himself ; which may be answered in a very few words. He exercised great charity and forbearance both towards Jews and Gentiles ; and therefore being so great an Apostle, ought to be an Example of the like forbearance to all succeeding Bishops and Pastors of the Church. Now if our *Reconciler* can prove from the Example of *St. Paul*, that the Governours of the Church ought not to prescribe the decent Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, or ought to alter and abolish them, in charity and condescension to Dissenters, I will yield the Cause.

Let

Let us then consider what St. Paul's condescension was, and I observe in general that he was an Example of the same condescension and forbearance which he perswaded other private Christians to exercise; and therefore if that charity and forbearance which he exhorts the Christians to exercise towards each other, does not overthrow Ecclesiastical Authority, nor plead for the Indulgence and Toleration of Dissenters; then St. Paul's Example cannot do this neither. This will appear from considering particulars. In this Epistle *Ibid. v. 13.*

to the *Corinthians* he perswades them not to eat meats offered to Idols, especially in an Idols Temple, for fear of offending and scandalizing weak Christians: and this he tells them he would observe himself. *Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.* In the Epistle to the *Romans* he perswades believing Jews and Gentiles to receive each other, and not to judge, and censure, and scandalize one another about the observation or non-observation of the Law of *Moses*; and this condescension both to Jews and Gentiles, he exercised himself. *Unto the Jew I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without the Law, as without Law, that I might gain them that are without Law:* That is, when he was among the Jews, he lived as a Jew, observed the Law of *Moses* as they did; when he was among the Gentiles, who

1 Cor. 9. 20,
21, 22.

who had no regard to the Law of *Moses*, he did not observe it; neither; he complied with the weakness and mistakes both of Jews and Gentiles; *he became all things to all men, that he might by all means gain some*; that is, he practised that condescension and forbearance which he taught others to practise. And if that did not concern the case of our Dissenters, nor plead for the like Indulgence and Toleration for them, (as I have already proved at large it does not) neither can the Apostle's Example prove any such thing. All this condescension of the Apostle was not in the exercise of his Apostolical Authority, but in the use of his private liberty, which he was very willing to restrain to make his Ministry the more effectual; but he never parted with his Authority to govern the Church, and to prescribe the Rules and Orders of Worship, for the sake of any Dissenters, as I have already proved.

Prot. Recon.
p. 138.

1 Cor. 9.

But there is one instance more of St. Paul's condescension, which our *Reconciler* takes notice of, and indeed it is a very notable one, viz. that though St. Paul asserts his right to live upon the Churches stock, as well as other Ministers, yet he maintained himself by his own labour, that he might preach the Gospel to the *Corinthians* without charge, (for it is plain that he did receive Contributions from other Churches) and this he did, lest he should hinder the Gospel of Christ, and to cut off occasion from them that desire occasion. From whence our *Reconciler* thus argues: *Wherefore, although the*

the Rulers of the Church have certainly a right to impose things indifferent, yet with submission to them, I conceive they should not exercise that power in like circumstances, viz. when by the exercise thereof they give occasion to them that desire occasion, to traduce them as men who more regard a Ceremony than an immortal Soul, the exercise of their commanding power, than the preserving poor Souls from damning Schisms, and the Church from sad Divisions; when it hinders the preaching of the Gospel to their Flock, as this imposing seems to do. *Ad Populum phalera.*

Now I shall briefly consider the Case, and then I will consider our Reconciler's Application. The Case is this: St. Paul had a right to live on the Gospel, by Gods own appointment and ordination, as the Priests under the Law, who ministred in holy things, lived of the things of the Temple, and they which wait at the Altar are partakers of the Altar, have their portion allotted them out of those Sacrifices which are offered there; and thus the other Apostles were maintained. But St. Paul in Corinth, and all the Regions of Achaia, preached the Gospel freely; took nothing of them, but partly supplied his wants by his own labour, partly was supplied by the Contributions of other Churches, as he expressly tells them, I robbed other Churches, taking wages of them, to do you service; when I was present with you and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied; 2 Cor. 11.8. What then was the reason why the Apostle who made

v. 14.

v. 12.

made no scruple to receive from other Churches, yet preached, and was always resolved to preach the Gospel freely at *Corinth*? Now he has hinted two reasons of this: 1. That he observed something so saving in the temper of that People, that he greatly suspected it would hinder the progress of the Gospel among them, if it should prove matter of charge, especially at the first preaching of it. This reason he assigns for it in those words, *Nevertheless we have not used this power, but suffered all things, lest we should hinder the Gospel of Christ.* This is no universal reason against the publick maintenance of Gospel-Ministers, that it hinders the Gospel of Christ; for then God would not have ordained, as the Apostle tells us he has, *that those who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel:* and therefore it must have a particular respect to the temper of that People, as he sufficiently intimates, when he so often repeats, that he preached the Gospel freely to them, and without charge, and was not chargeable to any of them, that he kept himself from being burdensome to them, even when he was in want; which plainly taxes them with a niggardly temper, that they could see so great an Apostle who preached the Gospel to them, in want, and not supply his wants themselves, but suffer those of *Macedonia* to do it. We cannot imagine that he who was ready to receive from other Churches, should chuse rather to want at *Corinth*, than to ask them for any thing, or freely discover his wants to them, if they would not take notice

tice of it themselves, had he not perceived how unwilling they were to part with any thing, and what a prejudice they had against a chargeable Religion. And St. Paul gives too much jealousy of this temper in them, even where he commends them for their charity. There was a Collection to be made for the relief of the poor Christians in *Judea*; the Churches of *Achaia* had done something already, and it seems had promised more; and St. Paul took the advantage of this to work an emulation in the Churches of *Macedonia* to do the like, and it seems it had the effect he hoped for; for their zeal of which he had boasted, had provoked very many; that is, had excited them to very liberal Contributions. And now some Brethren of *Macedonia* were to go to *Corinth* with St. Paul to receive their Collections; and it seems after all his boasts of them, he was very jealous how he should find things when he came, and therefore sent before-hand to give them notice of it, that they might be in a readiness: Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the Brethren that 2 Cor. 9. 1, &c. they would go before unto you, and make up before-hand your bounty, wherof ye had notice before, that the same may be ready as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness; lest if it should prove otherwise, both he and they should be ashamed of it, as he speaks in the former verse: and therefore he uses several Arguments to perswade them to a liberal Contribution. And indeed it is a sufficient Argument that they were not very forward to part with any thing,

thing, that they did not take care of the Apostles maintenance, as it is plain they did not; for had they been of a generous and liberal temper, they would have made provision for the Apostle, whether he had asked it or not; and it does not appear that at least at first he ever refused any thing from them, but onely that he did not challenge it, as of right he might.

The Apostle having discovered this to be their temper, was resolved not to disgust them at the first preaching of the Gospel, by making it chargeable, but rather chose to work for his living, and to endure some want, than to ask any thing of them; which being a voluntary service, and more than God himself required of him, he expected a great reward for it. This was matter of glorying to him, that he had not used that power which God had given him to require maintenance from those to whom he preached. To preach the Gospel was his duty, and this he could not glory in, because he was under a necessity to do it; but it was not matter of strict duty to preach the Gospel to a People who would not supply his wants: for God had ordained that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. But says the Apostle, *I have used none of these things, (he had not challenged this right) neither have I written these things, that it should be done so unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make any glorying void. For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me, and so is unto me,*

1 Cor. 9. 15,
16, 18.

me, if I preach not the Gospel. What is my reward then? verily that when I preach the Gospel I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel. Our Reconciler fixes upon these last words, That if in these circumstances he had used his power, he should have abused it; whereas *χρησθῆναι* signifies to use as well as to abuse, as *abutor* does in the Latine; and it can signifie no otherwise here: for what abuse had it been of his power, to have demanded a supply of his necessary wants, which God had ordained he should have? or what glorying had it been to him not to abuse his power in the Gospel, any more than it was to preach the Gospel, which being a necessary duty, was no matter of glorying to him? and yet not to use his power, was as much his duty as to preach the Gospel, when to use it was an abuse, that is, a fault; but it was matter of glory not to use the power he had, which was such a voluntary service as deserved a reward.

Now is not our Reconciler a man of a wonderful reach, who from hence can prove that the Governours of the Church ought not in like circumstances to exercise that power, which he acknowledges they have, to impose indifferent things? for what likeness can there be between these two cases? The power to challenge a maintenance, is a personal right which men may use, or may not use if they please; it is their right, but it is not their duty: but the power of imposing indifferent things, as he calls it, or the power of prescribing

bing the Rules and Orders and Circumstances of Worship (if there be any such power, as he grants there is) is the power and authority of an Office, is a Trust and a Duty, the prudent and faithful discharge of which, they must give an account of; and therefore must not, when they please, either part with the power or the exercise of it. *St. Paul* was contented to part with the temporal rewards of his Ministry, that he might the more successfully discharge the Ministry it felt; therefore Church-Governours must not exercise their Authority in the discharge of their Ministry, to humour Dissenters. *St. Paul* did more than his strict duty required, that he might have something to glory in; therefore the Governours of the Church must neglect their duty, and lose their reward. Indeed our *Reconciler* talks as if the Churches Authority in indifferent things, were onely a personal right, a Complement to Church-Governours, an ornamental power, which they may use or may let alone, as they please; and if this were so, I should presently be of our *Reconciler's* mind: but I believe they have no such kind of useles Authority as this; Christ has not complemented his Ministers with any power which is not for the use and service of the Church: and therefore if they have power in indifferent things, this is a useful power, and that which they ought to use, when there is reason for it, whoever be offended at it.

Another reason why *St. Paul* preached the Gospel

Gospel freely at Corinth, he gives us in the 2 Cor. 11. 12, 13. *What I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them that desire occasion, that wherein they glory they may be found even as we : for such are false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ.* The meaning of which is this: There were several false Teachers who crept in among them, and used all manner of arts to recommend themselves to the *Corinthians*; and among others this seems to be one, that they preached the Gospel freely to them, onely as they pretended out of love of their Souls; which was a very popular art, especially to that People; and therefore St. Paul resolved to persist in preaching the Gospel freely to them, *to cut off occasion from them that desire occasion*; that is, to disappoint those arts of deceit whereby these false Teachers endeavoured to recommend themselves, *that wherein they glory they may be found even as we*: that whereas they glory in preaching the Gospel freely, this may give them no advantage, since it is no more than what I my self have all along done, and still continue to do. Our Reconciler paraphraseth these words, thus: *To cut off occasion from them that desire occasion, that is, lest his enemies should take occasion from the exercise of this his liberty, to charge, or to traduce him as one who more consulted his own profit than the glory of God, and the propagation of the Gospel.* But what occasion had there been for this, though he had taken Wages of them, as he says he did of other Churches, to supply his

Prot. Reconi.
p. 138.

necessities ? it was sufficiently evident notwithstanding, that he did exact nothing from them to serve the ends of covetousness and ambition : for certainly a man may desire the supply of his wants, without being charged with covetousness ; but the Apostle would not suffer these false Prophets, by a pretended and hypocritical Zeal, to outdo him in any thing. Now the Apostle's care to give no advantage to false Teachers, is a good Example to the Governours of our Church not to do so neither ; and I am sure they cannot give them greater advantage, than to sacrifice all Order and Decency to their pretended Scruples.

Well, but says our *Reconciler*, the Rulers of the Church, by the exercise of this power in indifferent things, *do give occasion to them that desire occasion to traduce them as men who more regard a Ceremony than an immortal Soul, the exercise of their commanding Power, than the preserving of poor Souls from damning Schisms, and the Church from sad Divisions, &c.* These are very spiteful, but very foolish Insinuations. As for Schisms and Divisions, we have already considered where that charge must rest ; and then how do Ceremonies come in competition with the Souls of men ? Does the appointment of some Ceremonies for the decent and orderly performance of Religious Worship, hinder the salvation of mens Souls ? Cannot men be saved who observe the Ceremonies of our Church ? Then indeed our *Reconciler* might well complain, that those who impose such damning Ceremonies, have more
regard

regard to a Ceremony than to an immortal Soul; otherwise there is no competition between Ceremonies and the Souls of men, and those who will be Schismatics for a Ceremony, will be Schismatics without it, and will be damned for their Schism, whether there be any Ceremonies or not.

All that remains in this Chapter, are his Answers to *Meisner's* Arguments, which I have already considered, as much as is necessary to my purpose.

CHAP. VII.

Containing an Answer to the Motives to Mutual Condescension, urged in the sixth Chapter of the Protestant Reconciler.

I Find nothing in this Chapter, besides some Harangues and Popular Declamations, but what has been sufficiently answered already: The whole proceeds upon those general Topicks, of the smallness of these things, the danger mens Souls are in by these Impositions, the obligations to Love and Charity; which have been particularly discoursed above in the first and second Chapters, where the reasons of these things are particularly examined. But however, I will briefly try whether I cannot give an Answer to all this, which may be as popular as his Objections are.

Prot. Recon.
p. 165.

I. His first Argument or Motive is from considering *how small the things are which cause our Discords and Divisions, when they are set in competition with the more weighty duties and concerns of Love, Peace, and the Churches Union and Edification, and the avoiding the offence and scandal of Jew, Gentile, and the Church of God; which he very pompously proves to be great Gospel-duties.* Now suppose the things in dispute be never so small, if they are of any use in Religion, and the Object of Ecclesiastical

cal Authority, (as our *Reconciler* owns they are) what will he conclude from hence? that the observation of such little things must not be enjoined? What, not when Christ has given authority to enjoin them? Does Christ then give any authority to his Church, which she must not use?—Must nothing be enjoined, which is little in comparison of Love, and Peace, and Unity? or must they be enjoined, and left indifferent at the same time? Must the Church appoint them to be observed, but command no body to observe them but those who please? In all well-governed Societies there must be Laws about little as well as about great things; and if there be no Authority to determine the least matters both in Church and State, it will necessarily occasion very great inconveniences.

Well, but we must not set these little things in competition with the more weighty duties and concerns of Love and Peace: No, God forbid we should. But does our *Reconciler* know what a competition between two Laws means? I know but of two ways that this can happen; either when they contradict each other, or are so contrary in their natures that they can never be both observed; or when there is a competition of time, that it so happens that we cannot observe both at the same time; as when we cannot at the same time go to Church to serve God, and stay at home to attend a sick Father or Friend; in which cases our Saviour has laid down a general Rule, That God prefers Mercy before

Sacrifice. But now upon neither of these accounts can there be any competition pretended between the Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, and the great duties of Love, and Peace, and Unity, and Edification. For cannot men observe the Orders and Constitutions of the Church, as to the external Rites of Worship, and love one another, and preserve the Peace and Unity of the Church at the same time? Indeed, can there be a better means to preserve Love, and Peace, and Unity among Christians, and to promote mutual Edification, than an Uniformity in Religious Worship, since it is evident that nothing breeds greater Dissensions, and Emulations, and Envyings among Christians, than different and contrary Modes of Worship? And if this be so, then there is no competition between the Ceremonies of Religion, and the Love and Peace of Christians; and consequently, no reason why the Governours of the Church may not command both, though the particular Ceremonies of Religion be acknowledged to be small things in comparison with the great duties of Love and Peace.

Yes, you'll say, the imposition of these Ceremonies does come in competition with these great duties of Love, and Peace, and Unity, because there are a great many who quarrel at them, and divide the Church upon that account; and if these controverted Ceremonies were removed, Love and Unity would be restored among us.

Now supposing this to be true (which I have

have already proved not to be true) what is See chap. 3.
this to the Governours of the Church ? If
they impose nothing which is inconsistent with
Love, and Peace and Unity, then the imposi-
tion of these things, in it self considered, can-
not be inconsistent with these great Gospel-
duties: for if what we command be consi-
sistent with Love and Unity, then the Command
(otherwise called the Imposition) must be so
too. It is not the command or imposition of
these things, which is inconsistent with Love
and Unity, but refusal of obedience to such
lawful Commands ; which is not the fault of
the Governours, but of the Subjects ; not of
those who command, but of those who will
not obey : and therefore these are Arguments
proper to be urged against Dissenters, but not
against the Governours of the Church.

As to give you a familiar instance of this :
A Master commands his Servant to put on a
clean Band to wait at Table, the Servant re-
fuses to do it ; upon this the whole Family is
divided, some take part with the Master, o-
thers with the Servant : in steps a Reconciler,
and tells the Master he did very ill to cause
such Divisions in his Family ; that Love, and
Peace, and Unity were more considerable du-
ties than a Servants wearing a clean Band,
which therefore ought not to come in compe-
tition with them : Pray Sir, says the Master,
preach this Doctrine to my Servants, and not
to me ; I have commanded nothing but what
was fit to be done, and I will have it done, or
he and all his Partners shall turn out of my

Family. Now let one who is a Master, judge whether the Master or the Reconciler be in the right. The breach of Love, and Peace, and Unity, is not the effect (though it be the consequent, which our *Reconciler* I perceive cannot distinguish.) of the Command or Imposition, but of the disobedience; and therefore when the Command is fit and reasonable, cannot be charged upon him who commands, but upon him who disobeys.

See Defence
of Dr. *Still*.
Separat. about
Church-unity.

But besides this, I observe, that Christian Love, and Unity, and Peace, in the Writings of the New Testament, signifie the Communion of the Church; and how kind soever they may be to each other upon other accounts, men do not love like Christians, who do not worship God together in the Communion of the same Church wherein they live, and there can be no Edification out of the Church. Now if there be no way of uniting men in one Communion, but by an uniformity of Worship, then to prescribe the Rules and Orders and Ceremonies of Worship, is as necessary as Christian Love, and Peace, and Unity is. Men who worship God after a different manner, must and will worship in different places too, and in distinct Communions; and those who will not submit to the Injunctions of a just Authority, will never consent in any form of Worship: and therefore this may multiply Schisms, but cannot cure them. This is all perfect demonstration from the experience of our late Confusions, when the pulling down the Church of *England* did not lessen our Divisions, but increase them. But

But our *Reconciler* confirms this Argument, that the Governours of the Church ought not to insist on such little things, when they come in competition with Love, and Peace, and Unity, &c. from the example of God himself, who was not so much concerned for the ceremonial part of his Worship, but that he would permit the violation of what he had prescribed about it upon accounts of lesser moment than these are. He instances in the Law of Circumcision, which was not observed in the Wilderness, because this would hinder the motion of the Camp : In the Law of the Passover, which was to be observed on the first month, and the 14th day of the month, but God expressly provided, that if any man were unclean, or in a journey far off at that time, they should observe it on the 14th of the second month : in the Sabbatick rest, which admitted of works of necessity and mercy, which were never forbidden by God in that Law, nor intended to be.

Recon. p. 170.

Now are not these admirable proofs, That God is not so much concerned for the ceremonial part of his Law, but that upon some accounts he would permit the violation of what he had prescribed, when it does not appear that he ever did so ? As for the neglect of Circumcision in the Wilderness, I doubt not but God had given express order about it, otherwise Moses who was faithful in all his house, and a punctual observer of all the divine Laws and Statutes, would never have neglected it : and this I may say with as much reason, as our *Reconciler*

reconciler can produce for Gods permission of it without an exprefs Order, and somewhat more. As for the Passover, let our *Reconciler* consider again whether the observation of it on the second month by those who were unclean, or in a journey on the first month, was a violation of what God had prescribed, when God himself had expressly prescribed it. And let him consider once more, whether works of necessity and mercy were a violation of the Sabbatick rest, when our Saviour himself proves that they were not; that God never intended that the rest of the Sabbath should exclude such works.

I am sure our *Reconciler* cannot produce any one instance wherein God permitted and allowed the violation of any ceremonial Law, according to the true intent and meaning of the Law, without exprefs order for it; but on the other hand, God was very strict and rigorous in exacting the observation of them, and did give as signal examples of his Justice and Severity upon such accounts, as upon any other whatever. Witness the man who gathered Sticks on the Sabbath-day, and was stoned to death for it. The fate of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, who quarrelled with *Moses* and *Aaron* (which is more like the case of our Dissenters) and offered Incense; the Earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and a Fire consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered Incense. To which we may adde the case of *Uzzah*, who was struck dead upon the place for touching the Ark of
 God;

God ; which was not lawful for him to do, though he did it with a very pious intention to preserve it from falling. Thus *Saul's* offering Sacrifice in *Samuel's* absence, though he had a very plausible excuse for it, and his sparing *Agag* the King of the *Amalakites*, and the best of the Sheep and Oxen, &c. cost him his Kingdom. This is no Argument that God was so little concerned about the observation of his ceremonial Laws, or thought any thing little which he commanded, when he so severely revenged the breach of them. God indeed did prefer true and real Righteousness, before any ceremonial Observances ; but he did not therefore countenance the breach of his meanest Laws. What our Saviour tells the Pharisees, *Who payed tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin, and neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith*, is a standing Rule in all these cases, *These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone* : they should observe them both, the great and the less matters of the Law, and not neglect or despise either.

2 Sam. 6. 6, 7.

1 Sam. 13. 9, 10, &c.

15 ch. 7, 8, &c.

23 Mat. 23.

So that Gods example in these matters is so far from helping our *Reconciler's* Cause, that it makes against him. God did not equal the Ceremonies of the Law with the more weighty duties of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, no more than the Church equals a Ceremony with the dearer interests of Love, and Peace, and Unity ; but yet God instituted these Ceremonies, and commanded the observation of them, and punish'd the breach

of

of them, even when the whole Congregation mutinied and rebelled upon it, as they did in the case of *Corah*, that is, when they came as much in competition with Love, and Peace, and Unity, as the *Reconciler* pretends our Ceremonies at this day do.

2. But if this will not do, our *Reconciler* has another way of arguing from the example of God to oblige the Governours of the Church not to impose these Ceremonies, when there are so many Dissenters amongst us who will not submit to them. As 1. *The example of*
 Recon. p.178. *Gods love in sending his Son into the World, that we might live through him----why then should they who are commanded to be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, refuse to part with their unnecessary Ceremonies, and to refrain the exercise of their imposing power in things indifferent----* Now if our *Reconciler* will give me a reason why they should not, I will tell him why they should. God has in infinite goodness sent his Son into the World to save sinners, but still they must be saved in that method which Christ has appointed. To this end Christ has given us his Laws, instituted a Church-Society, appointed Stewards of his Family, and Rulers of his Household, and given them authority to govern Religious Assemblies, to prescribe the Rules of Worship, and the Methods of Discipline, and all this for the salvation of mens Souls; and therefore the Governours of the Church must not renounce this Authority, and the exercise of it, because in its rank and order it is subservient to the
 great

great end for which God sent Christ into the World, *viz.* the salvation of mens Souls, and is instituted by Christ for that purpose. But you'll object, that the exercise of this Authority in indifferent things, is so far from contributing to the salvation of mens Souls, especially in such an Age as this, that it destroys them. What destroys them? the use of indifferent things? No, men may observe these Ceremonies without prejudicing their salvation. What then? is it the imposition of these things? Nor that neither: for to command that which will not destroy mens Souls, cannot destroy them. What is it then? an obstinate refusal to obey such Impositions? Right: for this makes men Schismatics, and will damn them; and thus disobedience to any other of Christs Laws, will damn men, though Christ died for them. And thus, according to this way of arguing, God, who did so infinitely love sinners as to send Christ to save them, ought to have given them no Laws, nor made any Conditions of salvation, for fear men should break them, and be damned for it. For is it not a greater thing to give his Son for sinners, than to indulge them in some little Follies and Extravagances? Will God, who loved sinners so as to give his own Son for them, damn them for stealing a shilling or two, for playing the Good-fellow sometimes, or for some kind and amorous Embraces? Sure he is so good, that he will repeal all these Soul-destroying Laws; and when we see this done, it will be time for the Governours
of

Ibid.

of the Church to renounce their Authority too in imitation of the love of God.

II. His next Argument is, That God is so merciful to weak and erring persons, as not to judge, condemn, or exclude them from his favour for any errors of their judgments, which are consistent with true love to him, and which they did not wilfully embrace, nor do persist in against conviction of their Consciences, but will upon a general repentance for their unknown sins, receive them to his favour, though they live and die under such errors and mistakes.---Why then should we who are commanded to be merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful---reject them from Communion, whom God will receive? why should we not forbear to condemn and censure them, whom God will absolve?---This is so fulsomely ridiculous, that I should be ashamed to answer it, were it not very fit to expose such popular Cant. For,

1. Though the infinite goodness of God does incline us to hope well of those who lived and died in invincible errors, yet we know not certainly how God will deal with them in the other World. God has nowhere told us any thing of it; and therefore this is not so certain as to make it a President and Example for Governours.

2. But suppose this were so (as all of us have reason to hope it is) yet this is no Example to Governours in Church or State. For there is a vast difference between Gods judgments in the other World, and acts of Government and Discipline in this: The one respects

respects mens personal deserts, and determines their final doom; the other onely respects the preservation of good order and government in Church or State. And therefore the final judgment considers all circumstances which may deserve reward or punishment, pity and compassion; not onely what was done, but who did it, with what intention and designe, whether knowingly or ignorantly, or the like: the other considers onely what is done, what prejudice it is to the publick, and how such an example deserves to be punished, and therefore it is very fitting for earthly Governours to punish those sins which God will pardon, because they cannot maintain good Government without it. If through ignorance and mistake (though so innocent and involuntary, that God may see reason to pardon it) any men should disturb the Peace and Order of Church or State, it would utterly overthrow all Government, if these men must not be restrained nor punished.

Our *Reconciler* might have considered, that God forgives us all our sins which we sincerely repent of, though they were never so great and voluntary; and methinks he might as well have undertaken the Cause of penitent Thieves, and Rebels, and Murderers, as of impenitent Schismatics. He should do well, when he sees the Tears, and Sorrows, and Agonies of such guilty Wretches, and hears their solemn profession of repentance, to mind the Judge and the Jury of the mercy and pitifulness of our good God, who forgives the
sins

sins of all true Penitents: and therefore they *who are commanded to be followers of God like dear children, to be merciful as our Father which is in Heaven is merciful, to put on bowels of compassion as the Elect of God,* should not hang up those poor penitent Wretches, but forgive that on Earth which God will forgive in Heaven. Now I wonder how a Judge and Jury would gaze upon such a Reconciler as this, whether they would think him fittest for *Bedlam* or *Bridewell*.

It is certain, that this good and pitiful God whose Example our *Reconciler* proposes, does himself make a difference between this World and the next, in executing Judgments; he sometimes punishes those sins in this World, which he himself forgives in the next: and therefore certainly Earthly Governours, whether of Church or State, may punish those sins in this World which God will pardon in the next. Thus it was in the case of *David*, whom the Prophet *Nathan* upon his repentance assured that God had pardoned him, and yet at the same time denounced the Judgments of God against him, the rebellion of his Son *Absolom*, and the death of the child begotten in Adultery. Thus we have reason to hope, that so pious a man as *Uzzah*, though he was struck dead upon the place, yet was not eternally damned for touching the Ark.

3. And yet Gods final Judgment is no Rule and Pattern for humane Judicatures, because Earthly Governours do not know the hearts and thoughts of men, as Gods does.

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He knows when mens ignorance is invincible and involuntary, which no man can know ; and therefore God can make such allowances in his last and final Judgment, which no man can or ought. God judges the hearts of men, but man can onely judge of their actions ; and therefore an Earthly Governour may and ought in justice to punish that which God may very equitably pardon.

4. Especially considering that this last and final Judgment of God is designed to rectifie all the necessary defects, as well as miscarriages, of humane Judicatures. A man who is guilty of some troublesome error and mistake, may and ought for the publick good, to suffer for it in this World, though it may be hard that he should suffer for it in the next : And this very consideration (as I have observed before) answers all this difficulty. Schismatics, how innocent soever their mistake is, ought to be cast out of the Church on Earth, or all Ecclesiastical Authority is lost, and the Church left without any Government to defend it self ; but if the case be favourable, God will make allowances for it in the other World ; and he who is guilty of Schism, without a schismatical mind, we hope may find mercy. And therefore this can be no reason for the Church not to pass her censures upon such men, if they are visibly guilty of that which deserves a censure. A temporal Judge does not intend to damn every man whom he hangs, nor an Ecclesiastical Judge to damn those whom he censures ; they are

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only concerned to see that the Judgment and Censure be deserved in this World, but they leave the final Judgment to God himself.

P. 179.

This, I think, is enough to answer to this Argument, though our *Reconciler* rhetoricates upon it. He observes, that the Scripture represents God as very pitiful; and we believe God to be very pitiful as any earthly Parent can be, but not indulgent to the humour or frowardness of children. *But it is this God of mercy who himself goes into the mountains to save, and to bring home the strayed sheep:* And thus the Governours of the Church ought to do, to bring home stray Sheep into their Fold, not to indulge them in their wandrings. But God provided an *Asylum* for him who ignorantly committed murder, accidentally he means, without intending any such thing; which is not the error of the mind, but of the hand, and therefore does not relate to this business. But God remitted the sin of *Abimeleck* because he did it ignorantly; but *Abimeleck* had been guilty of no sin, for he had not touched *Sarah Abraham's* Wife. But he had mercy of *St. Paul* for the same reason, though he persecuted the Church of *Christ*; but the mercy consisted in bringing him to repentance: unless the *Reconciler* will say too, that he had mercy on those who crucified *Christ*, because they did it ignorantly; and on all those Jews of whom *St. Paul* witnesses, that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. And indeed it is worth considering, that this Argument of the *Reconciler's* pleads for a Toleration of all Religions, espe-

20 Gen. 6.

especially if we can suppose that there are honest and ignorant men among them; such persons will be received by God according to our Reconciler's Principles, whatever Religion they be of, Jews, or Turks, or Pagans; though he does none the honour of a particular vindication, but onely the Papists. If Charity teaches us thus to hope, saith the most learned Bishop Sanderson, of our forefathers, who lived and died in the idolatrous acts of Worship, why shoud we reject them from Communion, whom God will receive? So that the poor Church of England must receive Papists into her Communion, as well as the Phanaticks; where we must observe the Charity is Bishop Sanderson's, the Inference and Application the Reconciler's.

III. His next Argument is from one great purpose of Christ's Advent, and the effusion of his precious blood, to make both Jew and Gentile one, by breaking down the middle wall of partition that was between them, and abolishing the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances. Now the conceit of it is this: He supposes the Ceremonies of the Church of England to be such a Partition-wall between Conformists and Nonconformists, as the Mosaical Law was between Jews and Gentiles; and therefore as Christ has broken down one Partition-wall, and made Jew and Gentile one Church, so our Governours ought to break down the other Partition-wall to make Conformists and Nonconformists one Body and Church; which is such a dull conceit, and argues such

P. 180.

2 Phil. 14, &c.

stupid ignorance in the Mysteries of Christianity, that I do not wonder he is so zealous an Advocate for Ignorance and Errour.

The Partition-wall is an Allusion to that Partition in the Temple which divided the Court where the Jews worshipped, from the Court of the Gentiles; and that which made this Partition was Gods Covenant with *Abraham*, when he chose his carnal Seed and Posterity for his peculiar People, and separated them from the rest of the World; and the more effectually to separate them from other Nations, gave them a peculiar Law, which was to last as long as this distinction did. For God did not intend for ever to confine his Church to one Nation, but when the promised *Messias* came, to enlarge the borders of his Church to all mankind. And therefore this Law was so contrived as to typifie the *Messias*, and to receive its full completion in the perfect Sacrifice and Expiation of his Death, which put an end to the former Dispensation, and sealed a Covenant of Grace and Mercy with all mankind. Thus Christ by his death broke down the Partition-wall, because he put an end to the Mosaical Covenant which was made onely with the Jews, and to that external and typical Religion which was peculiar to the Mosaical Dispensation, and made a distinction and separation between Jew and Gentile; that is, as Christ made a Covenant now with all mankind, so he put an end to all marks of distinction between Jew and Gentile, and to that typical and ceremonial Worship which

which was peculiar to the Jews, as a distinct and separate People.

Now indeed any such Partition-wall as this, which confines the Covenant and Promises of God to any particular People or Nation, and excludes all others, is directly contrary to the end and designe of Christs death, and ought immediately to be pulled down; but must there therefore be no Partion to distinguish between the Church of Christ, and Infidels, and Hereticks, and Schismaticks? Must there be no Walls and Fences about the Church, this Vineyard and Fold of Christ? Must there be no Laws made for the government of Religious Assemblies, and the Decency and Order of Christian Worship, for fear of keeping those out of the Church who will not be orderly in it? How come the Ceremonies of our Church to be a Wall of partition? the Church never made them so; for she onely designed them for Rules and decent Circumstances of Worship, which it is her duty to take care of. Let those then who set up this Wall of partition, pull it down again; that is, let those who separate from the Church, and make these Ceremonies a Wall of partition, return to the Communion of the Church, which no body keeps them from but themselves.

As for his modest insinuations, that our Ceremonies are *carnal Ordinances, weak and beggarly Elements*, and therefore ought to be removed for their *weakness and unprofitableness*, as the *Mosaick Ceremonies were*, I have already largely shewn the difference between a Ritual and

Ceremonial Religion, and those Ceremonies which are for the Decency of Religious Worship; which are as necessary, and must continue as long as External Worship, which requires external Signs of Decency and Honour, does.

Recon. p. 182.

IV. His next Motive to Condescension, is from the Example of Christ and his Apostles in preaching the Gospel; which in short is this: That when Christ was on Earth, he did not instruct his Disciples in such Doctrines as they were not capable of understanding, till after his Resurrection, and therefore left the revelation of such matters to the Ministry of his Holy Spirit, whom after his Ascension into Heaven, he sent to them. And the Apostles, when they converted Jews and Gentiles to the Faith of Christ, did not immediately tell them all that was to be known and believed, but instructed them in the plainest matters first, and allowed some time to wear off their Jewish and Pagan prejudices: therefore the Governours of the Church *should forbear imposing of some practices, at which our Flocks, by reason of their prejudice and weakness, will be apt to stumble and take offence.* But how this follows, I confess, I cannot understand; if it proves any thing, it proves that the Governours of the Church must not instruct their People in any thing which they are not willing to learn; that our Reconciler should never have published his second part, to convince Dissenters that they may lawfully, and therefore in duty ought to conform to the Ceremonies

monies of the Church when they are imposed : for if notwithstanding the Example of our Saviour and his Apostles, we may instruct our People in such things, we may require their obedience too, otherwise we had as good never instruct them.

But did Christ and his Apostles then intend that Christians should be always children ? Did not St. Paul testifie that he had declared the whole Will of God to them ? And when the Gospel has been fully published to the World for above sixteen hundred years, must the Church return again to her state of infancy and childhood, to humour Dissenters ? But indeed is the duty of obedience to Governours in all things which Christ has not forbid, such a sublime and mysterious Doctrine, that it ought to be concealed as too difficult to be understood ? Is it not a pretty way of reasoning, that *Euclid's Elements* is too difficult a book for a young child to learn, therefore his Master must not teach him to obey his Parents neither ? I am sure this was one of the first Lessons which the Apostles taught their Disciples, whatever else they concealed from them : for there can be no Church founded without Government, and there can be no Government where Subjects must not be taught Obedience.

But however, there is a great difference between the first publication of any Doctrine, and the preaching of it after it is published. The first requires great prudence in the choice of a fit time to do it in, and of fit persons to

communicate it to ; which was the case of Christ and his Apostles, which made it necessary to reveal the Gospel-mysteries by degrees, and to persons well disposed and qualified to receive them ; but when a Doctrine has been fully published and confirmed by all necessary evidence, and universally received as a Christian Doctrine, the Governours and Pastors of the Church must continue to preach it, whether Dissenters will hear or no ; for else we may lose all Christian Doctrines by degrees again, and return to our *Milk*, which he says is the *Doctrine of Christs Humanity* ; and leave off feeding on strong Meat, which he says is the *Doctrine of Christs Divinity*, because Jews and Socinians cannot bear it. Whatever has been published by Christ and his Apostles, as Christian Doctrine, is the sacred *Depositum* which is committed to the Church, and which all Bishops, as well as *Timothy*, are commanded to keep.

P. 183.

1 Tim. 6. 20.

P. 185.

5. His next Motive to condescension is from the consideration of that great Rule of Equity, which calls upon us to do to others, as we would be dealt with. Now I confess, this is a very good Topick to declaim on, as our Reconciler doth : for as it is usually managed, it contains an Appeal to the Passions and Interests, more than to the Reason of mankind. It is a sufficient Answer to this, to observe, that this Rule obliges no man to do any thing but what is in it felt just and equitable to be done : for what is more than this, how passionately so ever men desire it, is owing to their fondness and

and partiality to themselves, not to a true reason and judgment of things; and therefore unless it appear upon other accounts to be in it self reasonable to grant this Indulgence, this Rule cannot make it so.

To discourse the true meaning of this Rule at large, would be too great a digression from my present designe; and therefore in answer to what our Reconciler says, *Would we be contented if we were inferiours, to be punished, imprisoned, and banished for Opinions which we cannot help; or shut out from the means of Grace for such Opinions? Or should we not be glad that others would bear with us in some lesser matters in which we by our judgments are constrained to differ from them? and would not pass upon us the severest censures because we are constrained thus to differ?* I say in answer to these, and such-like Popular Appeals, I shall ask him some other Questions: as, Whether ever any Offender or Criminal is contented to suffer for his fault, or does not earnestly desire to be pardoned, and to escape? Whether it be unreasonable to punish any man, because all men are unwilling to be punished? Whether every mans love to himself in such cases, or that natural pity which all men have for those who suffer, be a Rule for the exercise of publick Discipline and Government in Church or State? Whether any man in his wits can think it reasonable that mens private Fancies and Opinions should over-rule the Authority of Church and State? Whether is the most pitiable sight, to see a flourishing and truly

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Apostolick Church rent and torn in pieces by Factions and Schisms, or to see such Schismatics suffer in the suppression of their Schism? Whether it be reasonable for the Civil Powers to punish Schismatics, when their Schism in the Church threatens the State, and makes the Thrones of Princes shake and totter?

The truth is, this Rule, *To do to others as we desire they should do to us*, may be a good Rule to direct our private Conversation, but it does not extend to publick Government; and my reason for it is this: That this Rule has respect onely to every mans private happiness, and supposes an equality between them. For that which makes this a Rule of Equity is, that equals (as all men are, considered as men) ought to have equal usage; and therefore that natural sense which every man has of happiness, that natural aversion to suffer wrong, and that natural desire to receive good from others, should teach every man to deal by others, who have the same sense of happiness, and aversion to misery, as they desire to be dealt with themselves. But now publick Government has a greater respect to the Publick, than to any mans private good; and a mans private and particular good, must give place to the publick Welfare: and therefore what aversion soever there is in mankind to suffering, it is very fit and just that private men, when they deserve it, should suffer for the publick Good; and it is not every mans love to himself, or what he is willing to suffer, which is the Rule here, but a regard to the
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publick Good. And though all wise and good men ought to prefer the publick Good before their own private Interest, yet whatever reason there is for this, it is certain mens natural love to themselves (to which this Rule appeals.) will never make them willing to suffer, especially when the sufferings are great and capital, upon any considerations; and therefore to do as we would be done by, is not our Rule in such cases, for then no fault must ever be punished.

Nor is there an equality between Governours and Subjects either in Church or State: Civil Magistrates are invested with the Authority of God, who is the supreme Governour of the World; and the Governours of the Church with the Authority of Christ, who is the supreme Head of the Church: and therefore they are not to consider the private passions and affections of men, that because they themselves are not willing to suffer when they are in a fault, therefore they must not punish others: for they act not as private men, but as publick Ministers of Justice and Discipline; and where there is an inequality, this Rule of Equity will not hold. Governours and Subjects are equal considered as men, but very unequal, as Governours are invested with the Authority of God, which sets them above other men. This I take to be the true reason why the same men pass such different judgments on the same thing, when they are Subjects and when they are Governours, because when they are Subjects, they have a principal regard

regard to a private and particular good, and consult the desires, and weakneses, and passions of humane nature; when they are Governours, they have a greater regard to a publick good, and consider what their Character, and Office, and Authority requires them to do. Thus we know, when some of our Dissenters had got the Power in their hands, they were as severe in pressing Conformity to their new Models and Platforms, as loud and fierce in their Declamations against Toleration, as now they are against Conformity and for a Toleration: When they had the Power in their hands, they saw plainly what the necessities of Government required; now the Power is out of their hands, they consider what is necessary to their own preservation; which makes them dislike those things, when the Government is against them, which they saw a necessity of before.

This is universally true of all sorts of People, that when they are under, they desire that liberty and indulgence which they judge unreasonable to grant when they are in power: And whereas some attribute this to the weakness of humane nature, which is corrupted by Power, and grows insolent and domineering; that Subjects see what is fitting for Governours to do, but Governours lose that tender regard to their Subjects, when they have Power in their hands: I take the contrary to this to be the true reason of it; that men who are in Power, understand the reasons and necessity of Government, and have a greater regard

gard to a publick Good, than to gratifiemens private Interests and Inclinations; but Subjects, when the Power is not on their side, are bribed by their own interest and self-love, to censure and condemn such acts of government as they liked very well in themselves when they were in Power. Which is a plain demonstration that this Rule, To do as we would be done by, is onely a Rule for private Conversation, not for publick Government; and that the private Resentments of those who suffer, is no Argument against the Justice, Prudence, or Charity of Government.

VI. His sixth Argument is from the nature and obligations of Charity; but I have considered this at large in the second Chapter, and explained the difference between a private Charity and the Charity of Government, and made it appear that there is no want of Charity in the Constitution of the Church of England.

VII. His next Argument is this: That *those Arguments which with the greatest strength of Prot. Reason are offered to induce Dissenters to conform to the Constitutions of the Church of England, do with equal force and clearness conclude against the imposition of those Rites, as the condition of Communion.* If this prove true, I am sure such Arguments are good for nothing on neither side; but let us hear what they are.

1. *It is well argued by Conformists, that the Rules and Canons of the Church-Governours imposed for Decency and Order, are to be obeyed by inferiours, till it be made as clear that they are*
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not bound to obey in the instances enjoyed, as it is evident in general that Inferiours ought to obey Superiours: for if the exemption from obedience be not as evident as the command to obey, it must be sin not to obey. Now our Reconciler mistakes the nature and use of this Argument, which is not directly to press any man to Conformity, but onely to conquer mens unreasonable scruples about Conformity; that in case they have any doubts and jealousies, whether it be lawful to obey in such instances, yet if they are not as certain that the thing commanded is unlawful to be done, as they are that it is unlawful to disobey the lawful commands of their Superiours, they ought to chuse the safer side, that is, to obey their Superiours, which they are sure is their duty, when they are not equally sure that to obey them in such instances is a sin. This our Reconciler says, is a good Argument, and therefore I shall not dispute that point now: But let us hear how he turns this Argument upon the Church.

That the Precepts of Christ and his Apostles, not to offend his little ones, not to condemn and scandalize our weak Brother, &c. must be obeyed by Superiours, till it be made as clear, that by imposing of such things which grieve and scandalize their Brethren, &c. they do not offend against the forementioned Precepts, as it is evident in the general, that they ought not to offend against them. Very good! But to whom must this be made as clear? to the Dissenters, or to the Governours of the Church? If the Governours of the Church are onely concerned to satisfie them-

themselves in this, all is safe: for I suppose they have no scruple about it, and therefore may impose these things with a safe Conscience: and yet this Rule concerns only the private satisfaction of every mans Conscience, whether he be a Governour or a Subject, in the lawfulness of what he either commands or obeys.

2. *It is strongly urged against Dissenters, that nothing can be unlawful, which is not by God forbidden; and therefore that Dissenters cannot satisfy their Consciences in their refusal to obey the commands of their Superiours, unless they can shew some plain Precept which renders that unlawful to be done by them which is commanded by Superiours.* But our Reconciler misrepresents this Argument, which is this: Nothing is unlawful which is not forbidden by God; the Ceremonies of the Church are not forbidden by God, therefore they are not unlawful: for as for the satisfaction of a Dissenters Conscience, that is so wild and uncertain a thing, that whatever the premises be, you can never conclude whether they will be satisfied or not: for they can be satisfied when they please, with, or without, or against a divine Law; and nothing shall satisfy them when they are not pleased to be satisfied. But let us hear how this recoils upon Imposers.

Nothing can be unlawful to be forborn or laid aside, for avoiding the scandal and offence of our P. 198. weak Brother, &c. which is not plainly by God forbidden to be done for those good ends. Wherefore, unless that our Imposers can shew some plain Precept



Precept which renders it unlawful to leave these Ceremonies indifferent, or alter some few places in the Liturgie which give this scandal and offence to their weak Brethren---they cannot satisfy their Consciences in their refusal to forbear the imposition of those things. But how does our Reconciler know this? Suppose Governours can satisfy their Consciences without such an express prohibition, what then? Is it a sin not to grant that indulgence which they are not forbid to grant by an express positive Law? For suppose that nothing is unlawful to be forborn which is not plainly by God forbidden to be done, how does this prove that it is unlawful not to forbear that which God has not plainly forbidden to be done? The Imposers cannot shew any plain Precept which renders it unlawful to leave these Ceremonies indifferent, therefore it is unlawful not to leave these Ceremonies indifferent; that is, it is unlawful not to do that which we are not forbidden not to do; which cannot be true, unless whatever God does not forbid, he commands; which would make ill for our Reconciler and all his dissenting Clients: for then we could easily prove that God has commanded them to observe all the Ceremonies of the Church of England, because he has not forbid them to observe them.

And indeed now I think on't, I suppose he takes this to be the meaning of that Argument which is urged against the Dissenters, that they are bound to do what they are not bound not to do, that what is not forbidden by God, and



and therefore not unlawful to be done, they are bound to do; and then I confess the same Argument would hold against the Imposers, as well as against the Dissenters: but it is a very foolish Argument against either. The true Argument against the Dissenters, is this: That they are bound to obey their Superiours in those things which God has not forbidden: for where God has not interposed his Authority, they are subject to the Authority of their Governours. The Argument is not, That they are in all cases bound to do what God has not forbid them to do; which is ridiculously absurd: for what is not unlawful, not forbidden by God, may either be done or may be let alone, without sin, unless some other consideration, besides its being not forbidden, alter the case: But the Argument is this, That what God has not forbidden, Governours may command, and Subjects are bound in Conscience to obey.

Let us see then how he applies this to *our Imposers*, as he modestly calls our Governours in Church and State. It is not unlawful, as not forbidden by God, to leave these Ceremonies indifferent; so far indeed it agrees with the case of the Dissenters, that the Ceremonies are not unlawful, as not being forbidden by God: but now where is the superior Authority over Governours to make it unlawful for them to impose that which it is not unlawful not to impose, then the case of Imposers would be exactly parallel with the Dissenters, who are under the Authority of their

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Governours; which makes that their duty which God had left indifferent, and that unlawful which God had by no express prohibition made unlawful: but here the Parallel fails, and therefore the Argument is not the same. For the Supreme Authority of Church and State, can have no superiour Authority on Earth to make that unlawful to them which God has not made unlawful. All that our *Reconciler* offers to this purpose, is onely this: That the avoiding *scandal and offence, and the preservation of Charity, Peace, and Unity in the Church*, lays as necessary an obligation on Governours to forbear what they may lawfully forbear, for the promoting these ends, as the Authority of Governours obliges Subjects to obey them in all things wherein they lawfully may; that is, that Governours are bound not to command any thing which they may lawfully not command, when hereby they serve the ends of Charity and Peace. Now if this were the case, yet so the Argument would not be the same; for then we must state the case of Governours thus: That they must not do that which is unlawful to be done, not that they must not do that which is not unlawful not to be done. The Authority of Governours does not alter the intrinsic nature of things, and therefore we may very properly say, that Subjects must obey their Governours in all things which are not unlawful; and that the things commanded are not in their own natures unlawful, is a good Argument to oblige them to obey: but the end and circumstances

stances of action alters its moral nature, and that which in some circumstances is not unlawful, in other circumstances becomes absolutely unlawful. And if this be the case here, that the imposition of these Ceremonies is unlawful, when it gives scandal and offence, and disturbs the Peace and Unity of the Church; then the Argument to dissuade Governours from such Impositions is not, that it is not unlawful to forbear imposing, (which is parallel to the Argument used against Dissenters, that it is not unlawful to obey) - but that it is unlawful to impose in such circumstances; which differ as much as to perswade men not to do what they lawfully may not do, differs from dissuading them from doing what is not lawful to be done. This I think is abundantly enough to shew that our *Reconciler* is very much out in his Logick, when he makes this Argument against Dissenters and Imposers to be the same: as for the Argument it self, that it is unlawful for Governours to impose these Ceremonies, when it gives offence and scandal to weak Brethren, &c. I have sufficiently answered that already.

3. His next Argument, which he says equally holds against the Dissenters and Imposers, is taken *from the littleness and small importance of the things upon which we are divided*; and it is in short this: That Dissenters ought not to disturb the Peace of the Church, by refusing obedience in such little things; nor the Governours of the Church, by imposing such little things. Now I need not concern

my self about this Argument, which is not likely to have any effect either upon Dissenters or Imposers; who, if they understand themselves, and act honestly, it is plain, do not think these things so little and inconsiderable, that they are not worth contending about. That the decent Ceremonies of Religion are not such very contemptible things, I have already proved at large in the first Chapter; that they are not so little that Governours ought not to impose them, I have proved at the beginning of this Chapter, and that sufficiently proves that this is no Argument against Governours; and if, as our *Reconciler* says, it be an unanswerable Argument against Dissenters, I am contented to leave it so.

However, our *Reconciler* is mightily out, when he thinks the littleness of a thing to be as good an Argument against the imposition of Governours, as against the disobedience of Dissenters: for Governours are bound to take care of little as well as of great things, because things which are little in themselves, may have very great effects, either good or bad; but there is no excuse for the disobedience of Subjects in such cases: for the less the command is, the less reason have they to refuse obedience. I believe all Parents and Governours in the world think so, excepting our *Reconcilers*.

Prot. Reconc.
P. 200.

In the next place, our *Reconciler* argues from many general Topicks received and owned by all Casuists: As,

I. Qui non vetat peccare, cum possit, jubet.

bet. Which he translates thus : *He that being a Superior, a Father, a Master of a Family, &c. doth not what lawfully he may for the prevention of the sin of those who are subject to his government, becomes partakers of their sin.* Now suppose all this, what care can be taken to prevent sin, which it becomes Governours to take, which is neglected by the Church of England ? Yes, says the Reconciler, they may abate those Impositions which occasion the Schism. But this has been so often answered already, that I shall now onely direct my Readers in the Margin where to find the Answer.

See chap. 2.
p. 131, &c.

2. He says, *Divines, concerning the right interpretation of the Ten Commandments, and of the Laws of Christ, do generally lay down these Rules, viz. That when any thing is forbidden by these Laws, all those things are forbidden also which follow from that forbidden action, and for whose sake it was forbidden.* Now I think this is a very good Rule ; and if he can prove that the imposition of these Ceremonies is a forbidden action, I will grant that the Schism which is consequent upon it, is imputable to the Church ; but if it be not forbidden, if the Church has this Authority, and ought to take care of the decent circumstances of Worship, then the Schism can be charged onely upon the disobeying Schismatick. But this I have largely discoursed in the place before cited.

And now I come to those *shrewd Questions* which our Reconciler says he has met with in *the Books of the Dissenters, to which he finds no* Recon. p. 202.

A Vindication of the Rights

answer in the Replys of any of their Adversaries, and which he entreats the Champions for the Church of England, as they respect the credit of our Church-Governours, the reputation of the Church, and of her Discipline, not to pass by without the least notice taken of them, as hitherto they have done. Now though I do not pretend to the honour and character of a Champion, yet I have such a hearty love and reverence for my dear Mother the Church of England, that I cannot deny so easie a Request as this; the most troublesome task being to transcribe all these Questions.

Quest. 1. The first Question is, *Whether they do well that unnecessarily bring Subjects into such a straight by needless Laws for additions in Religion, that the Consciences of men fearing God, must unavoidably be perplexed between a fear of treason and disobedience against Christ, and disobedience to their Prince and Pastors?*

Ans. I answer, Such men do certainly very ill in it; but then this is not the case of the Church of England, for she has made no needless Laws: for Laws to direct and determine the external circumstances of Worship, according to the Rules of Order and Decency, are not needless, but necessary, as I have already proved. Our Reconciler grants, that the Church has this Authority; and if the exercise of it be needless, the Authority is so too; and then Christ has given his Church a needless Authority: for I suppose he will not own, that the Church has any Authority but what she has from Christ.

Not

Nor does the Church make any additions in Religion: for the decent circumstances of Worship are no additions to external Worship, but as necessary to it as Decency is; unless our *Reconciler* thinks that it is an addition to the Law of God, which commands us to reverence our Prince, and Parents, and Superiours, to command Children, Servants, or Subjects, to stand bare before them.

Nor need the Consciences of men fearing God be unavoidably perplexed between a fear of treason and disobedience against Christ, and of disobedience to their Prince and Pastors: for a great many men, who fear God, are not thus perplexed, and therefore it is not unavoidable. I will instance onely in the *Reconciler* himself, if he will give me leave to reckon him among those men who either fear God, or reverence their Prince and Pastors. And there is another good reason why this is not unavoidable, because there is no competition in this case between obedience to Christ, and obedience to our Prince and Pastors; and therefore no man need to be perplexed about it: and if there were a plain competition, there were no need of being thus perplexed neither, because all men, who fear God, do or ought to understand, that where Christ commands one thing, and our Prince another, inconsistent with the command of Christ, we must obey God rather than men.

Quest. 2. Whether Rulers may command any (indifferent and unnecessary) thing which will notably do more harm than good, or make an un-

A Vindication of the Rights

necessary thing a means or occasion of excluding the necessary Worship of God, or preaching of the Gospel?

Ans. If by *indifferent and unnecessary things*, he means things wholly useless, and by their *notably doing more harm than good*, that they are in their own nature hurtful as well as useless, it is certain Governours ought not to command such things; but what is this to the Church of England? The Ceremonies of our Church, though upon some accounts they may be called indifferent, yet are very useful as contributing to the Decency of Worship, which is as necessary as publick Worship is; and are not apt to do any hurt at all, and therefore are the proper Object of Ecclesiastical Authority. And with what face can our Reconciler pretend that *they exclude the necessary Worship of God, or preaching of the Gospel*, when God is still worshipped, and the Gospel preached in all the Parish-churches of England? unless he thinks that God is not worshipped, nor the Gospel preached any where but at a Conventicle.

Quest. 3. Whether is it more to common good and the interest of Honesty and Conscience, that all the Parsons in a Nation be imprisoned, banished, or silenced, that dare not swear, say, and practise all that is imposed on them, than that unnecessary impositions be altered or forborn?

Now I think I may have the liberty to ask our Reconciler a Question now and then. I ask therefore, Whether is most for the common good, that there should be any settled Order

der and Government in the Church; or that there should be none? Whether it is possible to maintain any Order or Government, without rejecting and censuring those who will not conform to it? Whether is most for the publick good, to maintain and encourage a loyal and conformable Clergy (when there is no scarcity of such men) or to nourish Schism and Schismaticks, to say no worse?

Quest. 4. *Had Images been lawfully used in places or exercise of Gods Worship, yet whether was it not inhumane and unchristian in those Bishops and Councils, who anathematized all that were of a contrary mind, and ejected and silenced the Dissenters?*

Ans. The bare lawfulness of any thing does not make it a fit matter for a Law; but whatever is both lawful and useful, if it be enjoyned by a just Authority, ought to be obeyed by the Members of that Church where it is enjoyned, and Dissenters ought to be censured according to the nature of the offence: for without this, there can be no government in the Church. But why he particularly instances in Images, I cannot tell, unless it be to insinuate that the Ceremonies of our Church are of the same nature with them; but our Church, which retains Ceremonies, removed Images, as just matters of scandal and offence.

Quest. 5. *Whether Christ who made the Baptistical Covenant the test and standing terms of entrance, did set up Pastors over his Church to make new and stricter terms and Laws, or to preserve Concord on the terms that he had founded*

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it, and to see that men lived in Unity and Piety according to those terms; and when they, as Christs Ministers, have received men on Christs terms, whether they may excommunicate and turn them out of the Church again for want of more, or only for violating these?

Vide Supra.
P. 104.

Ans. The Baptismal Covenant is sufficient for our admission into the Church, but Church-communion requires our submission to Church-authority, as I have already shewn: and to say, that nothing more is required of us in a Society than what is necessary to our admission into it, is contrary to the nature of all Societies in the World, wherein the terms of admission are very different from the Rules of Government. That a man has served an Apprentiship to a Trade, and is made free by his Master, is sufficient to make him a Member of such a Corporation; but though he understand his Trade very well, and behaves himself honestly in it, yet if he prove a disobedient and refractory Member to the government of the Society, he may be cast out again: and I wonder what the Master and Wardens of such a Company would say to the *Reconciler*, should he come and plead in the behalf of such a disobedient Member, that they ought not to make any thing necessary to his continuance in and communion with the Society, but what was necessary to his first admission. The Charter whereon the Society is founded, is very different from the particular Laws of the Society, whereby it is governed, as it must be, where there is any power of making

making Laws committed to the Governours of it: and therefore if Christ has committed such a power of making Laws to his Church, as our Reconciler himself acknowledges, it is a ridiculous thing to say, that they must not excommunicate, or cast any man out of the Church, who believes the Christian Religion, and lives a vertuous life, which is the sum of the Baptismal Covenant, how disobedient soever he be to the Laws and Government of the Church. Which is a sufficient Answer to

Quest. 6. His sixth Query, *Whether anathematizing men for doubtful actions, or for such faults as consist with true Christianity, and continued subjection to Jesus Christ, be not a sinful Church-dividing means?* Onely I shall observe farther, that as he has stated this Query, it does not concern the Church of England. She anathematizes no man for *doubtful actions*, for she commands nothing that is doubtful, though some men are pleased to pretend some doubts and scruples about it. But I have already shewn, that there is a great difference Chap. 2.
between a doubtful action, and an action p. 144, &c.
which some men doubt of; the first ought not to be commanded, the second may. And then our Church excommunicates no man, who lives in a *continued subjection to Jesus Christ*; which no Schismatick does, whatever pretences he makes to holiness of life: for subjection to Christ requires subjection to that Authority which Christ has set in his Church, as well as obedience to his other Laws.

Quest.

Supra. p. 105, &c. Quest. 7. As for his next Question, about imposing *heavy burdens, and intolerable yokes*, when Christ came to take them away, it has been at large answered already.

Quest. 8. *Whether Christ hath not made Laws sufficient to be the Bond of Unity to his Church, and whether any man should be cut off from it, who breaketh no Law of God necessary to Church-unity and communion?*

Ans. Christ has made Laws sufficient to be the Bond of Unity to his Church: for he has commanded all Christians to submit to the Authority which he has placed in his Church, which is the onely Bond of Union in a particular Church; and therefore those who are cut off from the Church for their disobedience to Ecclesiastical Authority, while nothing is enjoined which contradicts the other Laws of our Saviour, cannot be said to break no Law of God necessary to Church-unity or communion: for they break that Law which is the very Bond of Union, and deserve to be cut off, though they should be supposed to break no other Law of Christ.

Quest. 9. *Whether if many of the children of the Church were injudiciously scrupulous, when fear of sin and Hell was the cause, a tender Pastor would not abate them a Ceremony in such a case, when his abating it hath no such danger?*

Ans. A tender Pastor in such cases ought to instruct such children, but not to suffer such childish fancies to impose upon Church-authority. For to disturb the Peace and Order of the Church, and to countenance mens in-
judicious

judicious scruples by such indulgence, is a much greater mischief, and more unpardonable in a Governour, than the severest censures on private persons. If a private connivance for a time in some hard cases would do any good, it might be thought reasonable and charitable; but to alter publick Laws and Constitutions for the sake of such injudicious people, is for ever to sacrifice the Peace and Order and good Government of the Church, to the humours of children; which would not be thought either prudent or charitable in any other Government.

Quest. 10. If diversity in Religion be such an evil, whether should men cause it by their unnecessary Laws and Canons, and making Engines to tear the Church in pieces, which by the ancient simplicity and commanded mutual forbearance, would live in such a measure of Love and Peace as may be here expected?

Ans. Whoever cause a diversity of Religions by their Laws and Canons, or make Engines to tear the Church in pieces, are certainly very great Schismatics; but Laws for Unity and Uniformity can never make a diversity of Religions, nor occasion it neither, unless every thing produces its contrary; heat produce cold, peace war, and love hatred. Men may quarrel indeed about Laws of Unity and Uniformity, but it is the diversity of Religions or Opinions, which men have already espoused, not the Laws of Unity, which makes the quarrel. The plain case then is this: Whether when men are divided in their opinions

nions and judgments of things, and if they be left to themselves, will worship God in different ways, according to their own humours and persuasions, it be unlawful for Church-Governours to make Laws for Unity and Uniformity, because whatever they be, some men will quarrel at them? Or whether the Church may justly be charged with making a diversity of Religions, by making Laws to cure and restrain that diversity of Religions which men have already made to themselves? It is certain, were men all of a mind, the Laws of Unity could not make a difference; and therefore these Laws and Canons are not the Engines which tear the Church in pieces, but that diversity of opinions which men have wantonly taken up, and for the sake of which they tear and divide the Church into a thousand Conventicles.

But had it not been for these Canons, *by the ancient simplicity and mutual forbearance, they would live in such a measure of love and peace, as may be here expected.* But what *ancient simplicity* does he mean? The Church of *England* is the best Pattern this day in the World of the Primitive and Apostolick simplicity: for a Phanatick simplicity was never known till of late days; there never was a Church from the Apostles days without all Rites and Ceremonies of Worship, till of late; when men pretended to reform Religion by destroying all external Order and Decency of Worship: and therefore he is fain to take in *a commanded mutual forbearance* to patch up Church-unity; that is, if men be permitted

to worship God as they please, and are commanded not to quarrel with one another, and are not permitted to cut one anothers throats, this is such a measure of Love and Peace as may be here expected, that is, among Schismatics and Dissenters. But this is not such a Love and Peace as makes the Church one, for that consists in one Communion; which can never be had, where men differ in the Rites and Modes of Worship, and every man is permitted to worship God as he pleases.

Quest. 11. If a Patient would not take a Medicine from one mans hand, whether would not a good Physician consent that another should give it him; whether would the merciful Father let the Infant famish that would take food from none but his Mother? And if the People culpably will bear no others but Dissenters, is it better to let them bear none at all, than that they should preach to them?

Ans. Now I would ask our Reconciler one Question, Why all this will not hold as well in Civil as Ecclesiastical Government? If the People culpably will be governed not by a King and Parliament, but by some select and trusty Members of a House of Commons, or by another *Oliver*, is it better these poor People should be without any Government, than that they should be governed by Rebels, or a new modelled Commonwealth? Now here is an excellent Argument to perswade the King, out of great charity to his People, to resign up the Government, and let them chuse their own Governours; though I am afraid then, they

they would be cantoned into as many little Independent Kingdoms, as there are now Independent Pastors. But let us consider his comparisons.

He says, *If a Patient would not receive a Medicine from one mans hands, whether would not a good Physician consent that another man should give it him?* Yes, why not, so long as the Physician prescribed the Physick? But would such a Physician suffer such a humorfome Patient (could he hinder it) to go to a Quack or a Mountebank? or to take Physick very hurtful and pernicious to him? I believe the Colledge of Physicians are of another mind, who have been as industrious to suppress such Quacks, as the Church has been to silence Dissenters.

But *whether would the merciful Father let the Infant famish that would take food from none but his Mother?* But suppose he is as fond of a Strumpet as he is of his Mother, what would the Father do in that case? It is a pretty insinuation this, that dissenting Preachers are the true Mother, and therefore it is very pardonable in the People to long after them.

But is not our *Reconciler* a great Politician, who thinks it reasonable that publick Government should humour Subjects, as a Physician does a sick Patient, or an indulgent Father a froward child? that the Hospital or the Nursery should be the best Platform of Government in Church or State? But now our *Reconciler* speaks out, and in down-right terms pleads for the toleration of dissenting Preachers,

chers, that the People may have somebody to hear, and it is better to let them hear them, than that they should hear none at all. But there is no necessity of either that I know of: for thanks be to God, there are other excellent Preachers to hear, though the Dissenters were never to preach more; and there is no danger that those People who have such itching ears, should ever grow so fullen as to hear none at all: when they cannot hear whom they would, they will hear whom they can; and by hearing wise and honest instructions, may in time grow wise themselves; which I suspect some men are afraid of, whatever our Reconciler be.

These Queries our Author has borrowed from Mr. Baxter, and made them his own by his approbation of them; and now he tells us, *That Mr. Barret hath offered many Questions of the like nature, which he being slow of understanding* (which I believe the Reader by this time will take his word for) *cannot answer to his own satisfaction; and therefore in a great fright crys out passionately for help, Men of Israel help. And I will endeavour to help him out here too.* Recon. p. 203.

Q. 1. *Might not Conformists with a good Conscience have forbore those needless Impositions which they very well knew would be so needless and burdensome to many? Was ever Schism made so light a matter of, and the Peace and Unity of Christians valued at so low a rate, that for the prevention of the one, and the preservation of the other, the imposing of things indifferent, and not*

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necessary in their own judgment, but things doubtful and unlawful in the judgment of others, might not be forbore?

Chap. I.
p. 24, &c.

Ans. This I have sufficiently answered already in the vindication of the *Savoy-Commissioners*, and therefore shall onely adde here, that it does become the Governours of the Church to secure the external Order and Decency of Worship, and the good government of the Church, though they know a great many men will be offended at it, and turn Schismatics; and when men quarrel with those Ceremonies which have been anciently received and practised in the Church, upon such Schismatical Principles as equally overthrow all decent and orderly Constitutions, there ought to be no regard had to them, nor any alteration made upon their account. When these Ceremonies were appointed to be retained in Religious Worship, as they were purged from all superstitious uses in the reformation of King *Edward* the sixth, they were scrupled by no body, nor could the Governours of the Church foresee that they would be scrupled: and as for the happy resettlement of the Church under our present gracious Sovereign, whom God long preserve, to which I suppose Mr. *Barret* and our *Reconciler* refer, it was very unreasonable to justify the late horrid Schism and Rebellion, by yielding to the unjust clamours of those men who had by a pretence of Conscience once already overturned both Church and State; such Consciences ought to be governed and chastised, not indulged.

Q. 2.

Q. 2. *Whether they pray as they ought, Thy Kingdom come, or whether indeed they act not against their own Prayers, who endeavour to hinder the preaching of the Gospel (by making these unnecessary things the conditions of so doing.) Let us bring the case before our supreme and final Judge, and bethink your self whether of these two things he will most likely have regard unto ; the saving of Souls which he bought with his blood, or the preserving inviolate certain humane Institutions and Rules confessed by the devisers of them not to be necessary ?*

Ans. As for their being confessed not to be necessary, that has been often enough answered already ; and as for his Appeals to the final Judgment, we are very well contented with that, as being satisfied that no popular Cant will pass currant there. That the imposition of these Ceremonies does not hinder the preaching the Gospel, is evident to sense : for the Gospel is still preached, and I hope to better purpose than in the late days of Rebellion. And as for *the Kingdom of God* in this World, it signifies the Christian Church ; and to pray for the coming of his Kingdom, is to pray for the enlargement of his Church, which was never enlarged yet by the preaching of Schismatics, which divides and lessens the Church, but will never enlarge it : and therefore those who pray heartily *Thy Kingdom come*, must take care to suppress all Schisms and Schismatical Preachers, who are the great Obstacle to the enlargement of Christ's Kingdom.

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Q. 3. Can you or any mortal man prove that others may not be allowed to differ from you in such things, wherein you differ from the Apostolick Primitive Church?

Ans. I dare put the final decision of this Controversie upon this issue, whether the Church of England or Dissenters come nearest to the Pattern of the Apostolick Primitive Church.

But though it should be granted that we do not use all those Ceremonies which were in use in the Apostles times, and that we use some which were not then used, yet this will not justifie Dissenters: for the Church in all Ages has authority to appoint her own Rites and Ceremonies of Worship, while they comply with that general Rule of Decency and Order; but private Christians have no authority to dissent from the Church, while she enjoyns nothing which is contrary to the divine Laws.

Q. 4. What if the old Liturgie, and that new one compiled and presented to the Bishops at the Savoy, 1661. had both passed and been allowed for Ministers to use, as they judged most convenient; might not several Ministers and Congregations in this case have used several Modes of Worship, without breach of the Churches Peace, or counting each other Schismaticks? What if our King and Parliament should make a Law, enjoying Conformists and Nonconformists, that agree in the same Faith and Worship for substance, to attend peaceably upon their Ministry, and serve God and his Church the best they can, whether they

they use the Ceremonies and (scrupled expressions of the) Liturgie or no, without uncharitable reflections, or bitter censures upon one another in word or writing, where would be the sinfulness of such a Law?

Ans. This is much like Mr. *Humphrey's* Project of uniting all Dissenters into one National Church by an Act of Parliament under the King, as the accidental Head of the Church; which is largely and particularly answered in the Vindication of the Defence of Dr. *Stillingfleet's* Unreasonableness of Separation. The onely fault in short, is this: That it destroys the Unity of the Church, by dividing Christians into distinct and separate Communions, and lays a foundation of eternal Schisms and Emulations, which no Laws can prevent. As for Mr. *Baxter's* Liturgy, I confess, I do not see why men may not as well be allowed to pray *ex tempore*, as to use a form of Prayer which was written *ex tempore*. It argued very little modesty in those men to present such crude and indigested stuff to the Commissioners, and it argues as little understanding and honesty in our Reconciler to plead for it.

Q. 5. Dissenters ought, for the Peace and Unity of the Church, to yield as far as they can without sinning against God and their own Souls, and should not Imposers do the like? Were this one Rule agreed on, what Peace and Unity would soon follow? And if the obligation to preserve the Churches Peace, extend so far as to the Rulers and Governours of the Church, there may be as

much Schism in their setting up unnecessary Rules, which others cannot submit to, as in mens varying from such Rules.

See chap. 2.

Ans. I wonder what these men mean by the Dissenters yielding? as if they stood upon equal terms with the Church, and that the Church and Dissenters, like two Equals to compose a difference and quarrel, should yield and condescend to each other. The Dissenters ought not to yield to, but to obey the Church; the Church ought not to yield to Dissenters, but to govern prudently and charitably. The Church has done her part, as I have already proved, and the onely quarrel is, that Dissenters will not do theirs. But what an admirable Rule is this to make Peace, when they do not, they cannot tell us how far the Dissenters will yield, and what the Church must yield, to make Peace: but for ought I perceive, this is a great secret, and like to continue so. I suppose the Dissenters, after all, think they can yield nothing, and the Church sees no reason to alter any thing; and here is an end of this Project. Indeed it appears, that the designe is to perswade the Church to yield every thing, *all her unnecessary Rules which others cannot* (otherwise called will not) *submit to;* that is, at least all the decent Ceremonies of Worship, if not her own Authority too. And the onely Argument he uses to prove that the Church ought to yield, is because Dissenters ought to yield; that is, it is the duty of Governours to submit to their Subjects, because it is the duty of Sub-

Subjects to submit to their Governours.

I do not much care to be an Undertaker, and yet I will venture for once to propose this Expedient for Peace : Let the Dissenter, as in duty bound, *yield as far as he can without sinning against God and his own Soul*, and the Church shall yield every thing else that is necessary to this desired Union. This is but a reasonable Proposition, not onely because Subjects ought first to yield, but because the Church knows not what is necessary to be yielded, till she sees how far the Dissenter can yield.

Indeed would the Dissenter yield as far as he can, without sinning against God and his own Soul, there would be no need for the Churches yielding any thing : for the Church enjoyns nothing which is a sin against God, or injurious to the Souls of men : and there is great reason to believe that the Dissenters themselves do not think she does. Both dissenting Preachers and Hearers, when it serves a secular interest, can hear the Common-Prayer, receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper kneeling, though the Minister officiate in a Surplice ; and I am so charitable as to hope that when they do so, they do not believe that they sin in it, and therefore all this they can yield without sinning against God or their own Souls : and therefore this they ought to yield, and then there will be little left for the Church to yield.

His two next Questions, *Whether the Worship of God cannot be performed decently and in*

Chap. I. p. 79,
&c. & p. 109,
&c.

order, without these Ceremonies ? and whether if men must be without the Word, and without Sacraments, rather than without these Ceremonies (which yet there is no necessity of, nor is it the intention of the Church, that it should be so, as you have already heard) this do not make them of equal necessity with divine Institutions ? have been already answered at large in the first Chapter.

Q. 8. Whether the constitution of the Church should not be set as much as may be for the encompassing of all true Christians, and whether the taking of a narrower compass be not a fundamental error in its policy, and will not always hinder its stability and increase ?

Ans. The plain meaning of which Question, is this : Whether it be not the best way to secure the Church against her Popish Adversaries, to unite all Protestants of what denomination soever into one body ? and whether it be not more probable, that a little Church which has not many Members, nor any worldly strength and interest to support it, should be sooner destroyed than a numerous, flourishing, and potent Church ? In answer to which, we may consider,

1. It were very desirable, that the Church could be so modelled, as to receive all Protestants and Papists also into our Communion, that the Christian Church might have no Enemies who call themselves Christians ; but this is impossible to be done, while both of them recede so far from the Principles of Catholic Communion,

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2. The Unity and Peace of the Church within it self, how small soever it be, is a better security to it, than Schisms and Discords in its own bowels; and make the foundation of the Church as large as you please, if the building be not closely united in all its parts, it will fall with its own weight. While men are possess'd with Schismatical Principles, it is not enough to make a lasting Union to remove those particular things about which they differ at present; for when men are given to quarrel, they will never want occasions for it. Take away every thing which our Dissenters quarrel at, and you leave no remains of a Church of *England*; and thus indeed you may enlarge the Church by pulling it down, by plucking up all its Hedges and Fences, that it shall be no longer an Inclosure, but a Common. A Church which makes no new Articles of Faith, nor rejects any old one, which sets up no idolatrous and superstitious Worship, which observes all the Institutions of our Saviour, and secures the decency of publick Worship, and exercises her Authority for the government of Religious Societies, and the acts of Discipline prudently and charitably, has laid her foundations as wide as she can, and as she lawfully may; and those who will not embrace her Communion upon these terms, must stay out.

3. For at best, this is nothing more than carnal Policy, to think to secure the Church by our strength and numbers. The preservation of the Church is not owing to an arm of flesh,

flesh, but to the protection of Christ. His Flock is but a little Flock, but all the united strength and power of the World cannot destroy it, the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it.

4. When we speak of enlarging the Constitutions of the Church so as to *incompass all true Christians*, we ought to have a principal regard to the Communion of the Catholick Church; and those who take any other compass than what is consistent with Catholick Communion, though they should inclose a whole Nation of Dissenters, they would mightily straiten the foundations of the Church.

Those who reject all external Rites of Decency and Order, as unlawful in Christian Worship, and reform and enlarge the Church upon these Principles, reject the Communion of all Christian Churches that ever were in the World for 1500 years, and of most Churches at this day; and if this should enlarge the Church in *England*, the Catholick Church would gain little by it, when it unchurches most other Churches in the World.

The Church of *England* is modelled by such Principles, that she can hold Communion with all sound and Catholick Churches that are now, or ever were in the World, and all Catholick Churches may have Communion with her; which is as large a compass as she ought to take: for that Church is a little too large, which takes in Schismatics to her Communion; and too narrow, which excludes any true Catholick Churches,

Thus

Thus I have answered those Questions which our *Reconciler* borrowed from Mr. Baxter and Mr. Barret; and to these he has added some of his own, which I must consider also.

Q. 9. *Whether Baptism being requisite for the new birth of Infants, and their regeneration by the Holy Spirit---it be not hardship to lay such an unnecessary Condition on the Parents, who have power to offer or withhold the Child from Baptism, which shall cause them to deprive their Infants of so great a benefit; may not such Children complain in the language of St. Cyprian, Nos parvuli quid fecimus?* Recon. p. 207.

Ans. Now though this may be easily answered by observing, that in danger of death Children are allowed to be baptized privately without the signe of the Cross, and therefore no Child in ordinary cases can die without Baptism, but by the great neglect and carelessness of Parents, how scrupulous soever they are of the signe of the Cross; yet since it is so much in fashion to ask Questions, I know not why I may not ask a few Questions too, which I would desire our *Reconciler* to resolve; and they shall be but very short ones.

As, 1. How do Children come to have any right to Baptism? is it an original right of their own, or in the right of their Parents?

2. If Children have a right to Baptism onely in the right of their Parents, how do the Children of Schismaticks, who though they are baptized themselves, yet have renounced the Communion of the Church, come to have any right to be received into the Communion

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of the Church by Baptism? 3. How is the Church obliged to receive those children into Communion by Baptism, whom she certainly knows, if their Parents live, will be nursed up in a Schism? 4. How is the Church more concerned to alter her Constitutions for the children of Schismaticks, than for their Schismatical Parents? When he has answered these Questions, I will answer his; in the mean time I will proceed.

Q. 10. If men conceive themselves obliged to do all they can for the securing and restoring of the civil Peace, when it is once disturbed, and would not stick to lay aside a civil, if unnecessary Ceremony for the prevention of civil Broils, and the effusion of Christian blood, how frivolous soever were the exceptions of the seditious against it; must they not be as much obliged to do the like for the prevention of Ecclesiastical Confusions, and the effusion of the blood of precious and immortal Souls?

Ans. No doubt but they are. But as a wise Prince ought not to part with that Power and Authority which is necessary to preserve Peace, and to prevent civil Wars and Confusions for the future, onely that he may allay and prevent some present Heats and Commotions; no more ought the Church to heal a present Schism, by laying a foundation for eternal Schisms. The example of our late martyred Sovereign will teach all Princes to beware of the one, and those infinite Schisms which followed the dissolution of the Church of England, will convince any man how

how impossible it is to preserve the Peace and Unity of the Church, without the exercise of Ecclesiastical Authority.

Q. 11. Would not our Reverend Bishops once have condescended to these terms of Union? would they not have rejoiced to have seen the Church restored, and themselves readmitted to the execution of their sacred Function, upon such terms as the abatement of such trivial things?

Ans. I judge it very likely they might; as a banished Prince would be glad to be restored to his Crown again, though he parted with some Jewels out of it. But when the providence of God restores them to the exercise of their Function, without any such restraints and limitation of their power, it is their duty to use their whole power as prudently and charitably as they can. The restoring of Episcopacy, restored the face of a Church again, which was nothing but a Schism without it; and no doubt but all good men would be very glad of this, though upon hard and disadvantageous terms: but surely to restore the Church to its ancient beauty and lustre, in a regular and decent administration of all holy Offices, is more desirable than nothing but the meer being of a Church, still deformed with the marks and ruines of an old Schism; and therefore when this can be had, it ought to be had: and it is a ridiculous thing to imagine that Bishops must use no other authority in the government of the Church, when they are in a full possession of their power, than barely so much as they would have been

been contented to have bargained for with Schismatics, when they were thrust out of all power. Though whether *St. Cyprian* would have made any such bargain with Schismatics as inferred a diminution of the Episcopal Authority, I much question.

Had the Wisdom of the Nation at the happy return of his Majesty to his Throne, thought fit to have made any trial and experiment what some condescensions and abatements would have done, the Reverend Bishops no doubt would have acquiesced in it, not out of any opinion they had of such methods, but to satisfy those who do not see the events of things at a distance, by making the experiment. But that factious and restless Spirit of Phana-ticism, which began immediately to work, convinced our Prince and Parliament how dangerous such an experiment would be, and prevented the trial of it; and now we have such fresh and repeated experiments how dangerous these Factions are both to Church and State, our *Reconciler* would persuade our Governours out of their senses, to cherish those men, who if they be not suppressed, will most infallibly involve this unhappy Church and Kingdom in Blood and Confusion.

Chap. 2.
p. 140, 141.

As for what our *Reconciler* adds concerning the *Rubrick about kneeling at the Sacrament*, and the *Canon about bowing of the body in token of our reverence of God*, when we come into the place of publick Worship, have been sufficiently answered already.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Containing some brief Animadversions on the Authorities produced by our Reconciler in his Preface: and the Conclusion of the whole, with an Address to the Dissenters.

THUS I have with all plainness and sincerity examined the whole reason of this book: for as for the remaining Chapters, whatever is of any moment in them, I have answered before in the first and second Chapters of this Vindication: whether the Answer I have given be satisfactory or not, I must leave to others to judge; but I can honestly say, I have used no tricks and evasions, nor have I used any Argument but what is satisfactory to my self.

All that remains now, is a brief examination of those Authorities our *Reconciler* has produced in his Preface, to prove that our own Kings, and many famous Doctors of our own Church, besides many foreign Divines, have pleaded for that condescension for which he pleads in this Book. Now I thought it the best way in the first place to examine his Reasons for this condescension: for if there be no reason to do this, it is no great matter who pleads for it without reason; and yet I should be very unwilling to leave such a reproach

proach upon so many great men, that they declare their opinions and judgment for a Cause which has no reason to support it. And therefore to give a fair account of this also, I reviewed his Preface, and found there were two ways of answering it, either by examining his particular Testimonies, (we having no reason to believe any thing upon his credit) or by taking the Testimonies for granted, and shewing that this does not prove that they were of his mind. The first of these I had no great stomach to, as being a tedious and troublesome work, which would swell this Vindication to a great bulk; which is grown too big already; and the onely end it could serve, is to prove that the *Protestant Reconciler* does not quote his Author's faithfully: but I have already given such evidence of this in my Vindication of Bishop *Taylor*, as will spoil his credit with all wary men. And therefore I resolved upon the other way of answering him, to shew that the Testimonies produced by him, as he produces them, do not prove what he intended them for. But I called to mind that I had a Book* written upon this very subject, entituled *Remarks upon the Preface to the Protestant Reconciler, in a Letter to a Friend*, which I read over, and to my great comfort found my work done to my hand: for that Author has with great judgment said whatever I can think proper to be said in this Cause; and therefore I shall onely give some little hints of what I intended more largely to discourse, and refer my Readers to those

those Remarks for further satisfaction.

The intention of this Preface our Reconciler tells us, p. 3. was to strengthen the designe of his Book, by the concurrent suffrages of many worthy Persons both of our own and other Churches, who have declared themselves to be of the same judgment, and have pursued the same designe which he has done in his Book.

Now the designe of his Book, as I have shewn from his own words in my Introduction, p. 13, 14. is to prove that it is utterly unlawful for the Governours of the Church to impose the observation of indifferent Rites and Ceremonies in Religion, especially when these Ceremonies are scrupled, and many professed Christians rather chuse to separate from the Church than submit to them.

Now to prove this, he first alleadges the Authority of three Kings, King James, King Charles the first, the Royal Martyr, and best of Kings and men, as he is pleased to stile him, and our present Sovereign; and I know not where he could have named three other Kings more averse to his Reconciling designe. What King James his Judgment was, is evident from the Conference at Hampton-court, where he so severely determined against Dissenters, and kept his word all his reign, without granting any liberty to these pretended scruples; which is very strange, had he been of our Reconciler's mind, that it is unlawful to impose these Ceremonies upon a scrupulous Conscience. How much King Charles the first suffered for denying this liberty and indulgence,

is known to all men; and it is hard to think then that he was a Reconciler, for never any Reconciler was a Martyr for the Church. And methinks the Act of Uniformity, and the prosecution of Dissenters upon that and former Acts, might convince any reasonable man that our present Sovereign is none of his Protestant Reconcilers. But if notwithstanding all this, he can prove against plain matter of fact, and the evidence of sense, and the experience and complaints of Dissenters, all these to be Reconciling Kings, I am resolved I will be a Protestant Reconciler too; and I hope I may pass for as good a Reconciler as any of these renowned Kings, without recanting this Book. Let us hear then how he proves these great Princes to be Reconcilers.

Preface, p. 4.

As for King *James*, he proves him to be a Reconciler, from *Casaubon's* Epistle to Cardinal *Perroon*. Now how faithfully *Casaubon* represented the Kings Judgment, is more than our *Reconciler* can tell; onely I am certain, he did misrepresent him, if he made a Reconciler of him.

But there is no reason to take Sanctuary in this: for whoever considers the occasion of those words, may put a very sober construction on them, without giving any countenance to our *Reconciler*: for the Dispute did not concern the Rules of Order and Decency in Religious Worship, but the unscriptural Innovations of Popery, which they imposed upon all Churches as terms of Catholick Communion. Now in this Controversie any man
may

may safely say what *Casaubon* says for the King, without being a Protestant Reconciler. For there is no nearer way of concord, than to separate things necessary from unnecessary; to call nothing simply necessary, but what the Word of God commandeth to be believed or done, or which the ancient Church did gather from the Word of God by necessary consequence; that other humane Constitutions, whatever antiquity or authority is pretended for them, might be changed, mollified, antiquated, and that this may in the general be said of most Ecclesiastical observations introduced without the Word of God. Now this does not refer to the decent Circumstances and Ceremonies of Religion, but to such Ecclesiastical observations as are in dispute between us and the Church of Rome; as the Celibacy of the Clergy, Prayers for the Dead, Pilgrimages, Monastick Vows, the Worship of Saints, and Angels, and Images, and the like; for which the Church of Rome pretends the Authority of ancient Councils, or the ancient practice and usage of the Church. Now in these cases I am perfectly of the Kings mind, and yet do not take my self to be a Protestant Reconciler in our Authors way.

Our Royal Martyr, when he saw what danger Church and State and his own Royal Person was in from the outrageous zeal of dissenting Protestants, who did not now humbly beg for Indulgence and Toleration, but contended for Rule and Empire, was willing, if it were possible, to allay these Heats, and divert the Storm, by yielding somewhat to their boi-

sterous and threatening importunities; and if he had yielded a great deal more at that time than he did, I think it had been no argument of his own settled judgment of things. The *Reconciler* might hence prove, that the King thought it much better to yield a little at that time, than to ruine Church and State by too much stiffness, not that he thought it unlawful to impose any thing on his Subjects in matters of Religion which they were pleased to scruple.

And yet what is it that the King yielded under these necessities? For that, our *Reconciler* produces these words: *As for differences among our selves for matters indifferent in their own nature concerning Religion, we shall in tenderness to any number of our loving Subjects, very willingly comply with the advice of our Parliament, that some Law may be made for the exemption of tender Consciences from punishment, or prosecution for such Ceremonies, and in such cases, which by the judgment of most men are held to be matters indifferent, and of some to be absolutely unlawful.* Does the King in these words promise to alter the Constitutions of the Church, to abolish all Ceremonies, &c? By no means; he onely says, that he will comply with the advice of his Parliament to exempt such tender Consciences from punishment: And how can our *Reconciler* hence conclude, that the King believed it unlawful to impose these Ceremonies, because at such a critical time he was contented there should be some provision made to secure Dissenters from the execution
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of the penal Laws? And yet that ill usage which so excellent a Prince met with from these dissenting Protestants after such a condescension as this, gives no great encouragement to Princes to try this Experiment again.

Thus he proves our *present Sovereign* to be of his mind, by his Declaration from *Breda*, which he prints at large, I suppose, for fear People should forget that there had been such a Declaration, or what were the contents of it. How the present circumstances of affairs at that time might incline his Majesty to such a condescension, is not my business to inquire; it is sufficient for us to know, that the House of Commons presented their Reasons to the King against that Declaration, which so far satisfied him, that he gave his assent to the Act of Uniformity; and therefore I suppose is not of our *Reconciler's* mind now, and indeed never was, notwithstanding that Declaration; for he never asserted it unlawful to impose scrupled Ceremonies upon Dissenters, but thought it expedient at that time to indulge their weakness. And while matters were under debate for the re-establishment of the Church of *England*, no wonder that the King and his great Ministers should make Proposals of Accommodation, and offer their Reasons and Arguments for it; but I always thought that what is said by any person on one side or other, while the matter is under debate, is not so good an Argument what his judgment and opinion is, as what he agrees and consents to, when the Reasons on both

sides have been heard and scan'd.

Thus our Kings are our own again, and of all men in the world have the least reason to countenance such a designe as this, which serves onely to encourage a busie and restless Party among us, who first strike at the Church, but will never be quiet till they have usurp'd the Throne.

What the sence of our Church is in this matter, is evident from her Articles, Canons, and Constitutions; and this signifies a great deal more to me than the opinion of any private Doctors, of what note and eminency soever. It is unreasonable to oppose the authority of any particular Doctors to the Judgment of the Church, and it would be an endless work to number the Votes and Suffrages of private Doctors on both sides; indeed their authority is no greater than their reason is: and if any of them be of our *Reconciler's* mind, I am sure they speak without book, unless they have something more to say than our *Reconciler* has; and when we know what it is, we will consider it.

And yet those private Doctors of the Church of *England*, to whose judgment our *Reconciler* appeals, say nothing to his purpose; not a man of them affirm that it is unlawful for the Church to impose indifferent things, no not when they are scrupled; as any one may observe, who carefully reads their Testimonies. Some of them indeed do think it advisable, if it would heal our present Schisms, to part with some things of less moment for so good an end.

end. And there seems to be two sorts of these men. 1. Those who think this might be done, were there good evidence and assurance that such abatements would cure the Schism, and lay a foundation of a firm and lasting Peace in this Church. 2. Those who think this way ought to be tryed, whether it will effect the cure or no.

1. As for the first, if this were the case, that the exchange of a Ceremony or two, while the external Order and Decency of publick Worship might be otherwise secured, would certainly heal our Schisms, God forbid that I should ever be the man who should oppose so good a work. But if I may speak my thoughts freely, that which I take to be the fault of these great men, is this, that they trouble themselves and the world in declaring their judgments unasked about an imaginary case, which it is demonstrably impossible should ever be a real case.

This is evident not onely from the present temper and complexion of the Schism, which even among the most moderate Dissenters is improved far beyond the dispute of a Ceremony, but from this very consideration, that their Principles whereon they demand such an alteration, are schismatical, and it is impossible that the Peace of the Church should be built upon Schismatical Principles. Though it were possible that the removal of our Ceremonies might for the present quiet our Disputes, yet this Peace would last no longer than the men are in a good humour, because those

very Principles which disturb the Peace of the Church now, will also disturb the best Order and Constitution of the Church that can possibly be devised ; and while the Principles remain, the seeds of Discord remain also, and there will never want men or Devils to improve them into open Contentions.

Whoever believes that nothing must be done in the Worship of God, but what we have an express divine Law for ; that things lawful or indifferent in their own natures, are sinful when they are commanded, though by a lawful Authority ; that neither the Governours in Church nor State have any authority in indifferent things ; which are the great Principles on which men oppose the Ceremonies of our Church, will as inevitably be Schismatics under any constitution of things, as those who believe that the Sovereign Powers are accountable to the People, will be Rebels whenever they are not pleased, and have power to resist. Take away these Principles, and we may keep our Ceremonies ; and while these Principles last, it is to no purpose to part with the least Ceremony.

2. As for those who think the Church ought to try this Experiment, whether such Abatements and Condescensions will reconcile Dissenting Protestants to the Church, it is in my opinion a very dangerous, as well as a very unreasonable Experiment. All changes and innovations, unless they be made on great and urgent necessities, and with wonderful wisdom and caution, are of very dangerous

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consequence, and the greatest Politicians cannot always foresee what the event will be; but to change lightly and wantonly, without a certain prospect of a good effect, is a reproach to the wisdom and gravity of Government; it is onely like the uneasiness of a sick man, who seeks for some present relief by changing sides; though when he has done he finds himself as uneasy as he was before. If such Abatements do not take effect, we part with the external Decencies of Worship to no purpose, we expose our selves to the scorn and derision of Sectaries, make them more bold and clamorous, and weaken the Authority and Strengths of Government, which loses its due reverence, when it is not steady and true to itself. Of all persons in the world, Governours ought to make the fewest Experiments, and to confess the fewest faults and mistakes; if there were any, much less to seem to confess a fault when there is none: for Government ought to maintain its own Reverence and Authority; and nothing can maintain the Authority of Government, but a great Opinion both of its Power and Wisdom; that it can defend itself, and direct others; whereas all such changes and alterations, though they may be called a charitable condescension to the weakness and importunities of others, are always expounded as an Argument of the weakness or mistakes of Government, that it cannot defend it self against popular Clamours and Oppositions, or that they mistake their Rule. The first makes their Authority precarious,
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and teaches people not to fear their Governours when they see their Governours are afraid of them; the other destroys the Reverence of their Laws, and teaches people not to obey, but to dispute: And of all mistakes, the mistakes in Religion are most unpardonable, and the greatest blemish to the Wisdom of Government, because here is a standing Rule which is plain and certain, and does not alter with accidental and mutable events. So that if things be well settled at first, there is no reason ever to change, as may be in all other Laws, which must be fitted to times and places, and other changeable circumstances; but even the external circumstances of Religion must not vary with the unreasonable humours and fancies of men in every Age; or if it does, Religion it self, as well as Ecclesiastical Authority, suffers by it. Now whatever private Doctors are of another mind, it is all one to me: for those who assert any thing without Reason, assert it without Authority too.

His next Testimonies are borrowed from some foreign Divines, such as *Beza*, *Zanchy*, *Junius*; and it were easie to oppose other foreign Divines against them, if not to answer them out of their own Writings; but I do not think this worth the while, for it is certain these men are not infallible. I will never value those mens judgments about Ceremonies, who can be contented to change the Apostolical Order of Bishops for a Presbyterian Parity.

In the next place he insists at large on those terms

terms of Concord, which have been proposed both by our own and by foreign Divines between distinct Churches; and hence very wisely concludes, that the same liberty is to be granted to the Members of the same Church. But this I have considered already, and refer my Readers for further satisfaction to the Remarks upon the Preface to the *Protestant Reconciler*.

Chap. I.
p. 100, &c.

Thus I have done with our *Reconciler*, and shall conclude this Work with a short Address to our Dissenters, lest they should not rightly understand how much they are beholden to our *Reconciler* for pleading their Cause.

O ye Dissenters! when will you be wise? when will you learn understanding? when will you be able to distinguish between a Defence and a demure Abuse? I blush to think that you do not blush for your selves, when you read such an Apologie as this, which casts all the Dirt upon you imaginable, and yet you read, and admire, and applaud your *Reconciler* as a man of wonderful charity and tenderness for you. And yet if you believe that he has said any thing to the purpose, you must own your Cause to be very bad, and your condition to be very dangerous.

He all along supposes that you are Schismatics, and in very great danger to be damned for your Schism; which is his principal Argument to perswade Governours, out of charity to your Souls, to abate those Ceremonies which are very harmless and innocent in them-

themselves, but abused by you for an occasion of Schism. He confesses the fault is your own, for our Governours command nothing but what is lawful to be obeyed; and the only Apologie he can make for you is, that you are Children, and that you are froward and humourfome Children too, who will be sullen and refuse your Victuals, unless you can receive it from what hand you please: That you are very weak in understanding, very ignorant of your Religion, and this makes you so fearful and scrupulous, that you start at your own shadows, and stumble as men do in the dark, and are almost scared out of your Wits, if any knavish Wag make you believe that there are some Hobgoblins or Fairies in the way.

Now do you indeed believe that this is the true state of your Case? If you do not, then our *Reconciler* has said nothing for you, nor against your Governours (which I know you like as well as an Apologie for your selves) for which you ought to thank him, but has most grossly abused you. If you be not Schismatics, if you be not in danger of damnation for your Schism, if you be not fools and children, silly, ignorant, humourfome people, then all those Arguments which our *Reconciler* draws from these Topicks, to perswade Governours to humour you with Abatements, have no force in them; and if you be, I will leave you to consider how reasonable it is, that Schismatics should govern the Church, or Fools and Children give Laws to their Parents, Masters, and Governours.

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And if you say, that your *Reconciler* onely urges this as an Argument *ad Hominem*, that those who do think you to be such persons as he there pleads for, should grant you your liberty, and condescend to your weakness; it is a signe then that he would have our Governours take you for weak, ignorant, humourfome Schismatics; which is a wonderful Argument of his charity to you, and, a great signe of your wit and understanding, to be contented to be thought so. But if you would be thought so (to exercise the charity and condescension of your Governours) I must advise you by the way, never to boast more of your profound knowledge and attainments in Religion, nor to despise your Governours and Teachers as ignorant carnal men, lest you confute your Advocate, and spoil his Reconciling designe. This is a hard case indeed, but there is no help for it; if you will enjoy your liberty upon such suggestions, as these, you must mortifie your pride; if you would be indulged as Fools and Children, you must never more pretend to be wise men, and then there is no danger of any other discovery: for whatever indulgence is due to the weak and ignorant, yet (I think all men will grant, that) a proud conceited fool is not to be indulged, but to be humbled, and made to know himself.

Nay, if you will stand to your *Reconciler's* Plea for you, you must never write any more Books to justify your Separation, you must never talk more of Antichristian Ceremonies, and

and unscriptural Impositions, nor pretend to teach your Teachers and Governours : for no man can in modesty make two such contrary Pleas at the same time, to plead his knowledge, and his ignorance, the weakness and indiscretion of a child, and the understanding of a man, at the same time and for the same thing : which is to plead, that Governours must yield to you, because you are in the right ; and that in charity they must condescend to you, because through ignorance and weakness of understanding you are in the wrong.

Indeed though we should grant that a Reconciler might honestly make such a Plea as this for Dissenters, yet no Dissenter can honestly make this Plea for himself, because he does not believe it : He does not think himself a Schismatick, nor weak and ignorant (though possibly he may be conscious to himself that he is froward and humourfome enough) and therefore cannot honestly pretend that he is so, and that he ought to be indulged for that reason. *St. Paul* pleaded for condescension to the weak Jews, but the Jews never pleaded this for themselves, but scorned the Plea : for if men know their own mistakes, they must rectifie them ; if they are sensible of their own weakness, they must submit to their Governours, not plead their weakness to excuse their disobedience. In short, no man can honestly make this Plea, but he who is sensible of his own weakness and ignorance ; and he who is sensible of this, cannot modestly do it :
for

for it is an immodest thing for any man to desire to be indulged in his ignorance and mistakes. So that though a Dissenter may like the general Doctrine of the *Reconciler*, yet he cannot like the application of it to himself, and ought never to plead it in his own case; which is to put tricks upon Government, and to cheat them with false and counterfeit Pleas, which when it is known, as it is certainly known in this case, is an insolent contempt of the Wisdom of Governours.

And since no Dissenters can honestly or modestly use this Plea, I have much wondered to hear them so mightily applaud our *Protestant Reconciler*, when they cannot justify themselves in his way. If they think our *Reconciler* did really speak his Conscience, when he charges them with a damning Schism, with weakness and ignorance, and a childish folly, he has given as bad a character of them, as the worst Enemy they have can do; onely he has broken their heads and given them a Plaister, and it argues great tameness and mortification in them to take it so patiently: if he did not believe this (as I presume the Dissenters charitably think he did not) he has put a great abuse upon his Governours, reproaches them for not indulging Dissenters, who, as he suggests, through weakness and ignorance, and tenderness of Conscience, fall into Schism, and destroy their Souls, when he himself believes no such thing of them; and yet this would prove a very fatal mistake in Government, to grant that liberty to an obstinate,

stinate, conceited, incurable Schismatick, which may in some cases be charitably pleaded for a weak, and ignorant, and scrupulous Conscience.

And I wonder what service our *Reconciler* could think to do, by pleading for the Dissenters under such a character as they will neither own themselves, nor their Governours believe of them. He takes it for granted, that they are guilty of Schism, and that their Schism is owing to a weak and ignorant, tender and scrupulous Conscience. Now Dissenters disown all this; they do not think themselves Schismaticks, or at least are too wise to own it; much less do they think themselves ignorant, but the most knowing and understanding Christians, the very Gnosticks of the Age; nor are they scrupulous, but fully assured that they are in the right, and their Governours in the wrong; and therefore if they be wise, they will give him no thanks for his pains. And our Governours know indeed that they are Schismaticks, and that they are ignorant or worse; but do not take them for weak, tender-conscienced, scrupulous Schismaticks, but know the quite contrary, that they are proud, conceited, troublesome, factious; that they despise Dominions, and speak evil of Dignities; that they are restless Underminers of the settled Constitutions of Church & State, wherein they live; that they despise instruction, and think themselves too wise to learn, or receive better information; and this they are as certain of, as forty years experience can make them. So that

that were our *Reconciler's* Arguments never so good to perswade Governours to indulge weak, and scrupulous, and tender Consciences, yet they fail in their application to Dissenters, and are not so much as an Argument *ad hominem*, because our Governours do not, and have no reason to believe our Dissenters to be such persons; and I cannot imagine what makes our Dissenters so fond of this *Reconciler*, unless it be that they find so much of their own temper and spirit in him, to unsettle the present Constitutions of the Church, and to censure and reproach the Wisdom and Charity of his Governours.

And therefore I would advise Dissenters to act like men, and if they are resolved to continue Dissenters, to keep their Post, and stand upon their defence, and not to take Sanctuary in such lame Apologies, as no considering man can make for himself without blushing. If they are in the right, they may justify themselves against all Imposers, without the help of a *Reconciler*; and if they are in the wrong, no *Reconciler* can help them. And therefore they are bound in their own defence to answer the Second Part of the *Protestant Reconciler*, as I have done the First in the defence of my dear Mother the Church of *England*; which God Almighty long preserve and defend against all; whether Popish or Protestant, Dissenters and Reconcilers. *Amen.*

THE END.



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